June 2000 Vol. 25, No. 10 $3.50 CAN $4.50

S·o·j·o·u·r·n·e·r

The Women's Forum

To choose when, with whom, & how to have sex

Sexual RIGHTS

To have a respectful sexual relationship

To enjoy pleasurable & safer sex

What is Marriage For? • Paula L. Ettelbrick

Organizing Korean Americans Against Homophobia • Judy Han

Sexual Rights Campaign of South Africa • Shelley Mains

Rainbow Colored Tupperware Party (aka Millennium March) • Karen Pittelman

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DOT & FLO

"We told you so."

Don't sit all alone with your problems. Get expert, eccentric, exceptional—and sometimes contradictory—advice from *Sojourner*'s own Dot & Flo, purveyors of opinion on the personal and the political. Send your queries and tales of woe to: Dot & Flo, c/o *Sojourner*, 42 Seaverns Avenue, Boston, MA 02130, or fax to (617) 524-9397, or e-mail to: Dot-Flo@sojourner.org.

Dear Dot and Flo,

I am a long time feminist and am doing my best to raise my sixteen-year-old daughter to be the same. I wasn't much older than she is when I first looked at my cervix at a local feminist health center, and I have every edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* on my bookshelves. Since she was a preteen I've talked to her about sex and have let her know that I am open to her talking to me about sex, birth control, relationships, etc. We are very close and we sometimes talk about which of her friends are sexually active, who's coming out, etc. But I was blown away last week when I was doing her laundry and found some condoms in the pocket of her jeans. She hangs out with a group of guys and other young women, but I don't think she has a steady boyfriend, yet now I suspect she's having sex. Why hasn't she come to me to discuss this?

I'm worried about her!

Signed,
Anxious Mom

FLO RESPONDS:

If you were talking to another parent about this, you would be quick to say that having condoms in one's jeans is not the same as having sex (it may just mean your daughter's school has a pretty neat sex ed program where they actually distribute those little latex lifesavers). If you were talking to another parent about this, you would be quick to praise her daughter for practicing prevention if she is sexually active. You would be quick to praise the parent about setting the groundwork for her daughter to be able to make wise choices and take care of her body. If you were talking to another parent about this, you would urge her to understand that sometimes kids simply aren't comfortable talking to their own parents about sex.

Sometimes out of love and respect kids don't tell their parents they are "doing it" because they fear it would disappoint them. Sometimes they are flexing their developing muscles of independence and leaving their parents out of an intimate decision (even as they rely on the safe haven of parental love). You know all this. It's just really, really hard when it's your own kid, for about a million reasons which you probably know already (she's growing up and so are you; your relationship is changing; you fear for her safety and happiness, blah blah blah.) Take a deep breath and decide if you want to discuss this with your daughter. After all, she left the condoms in her jeans and she still lets you do her laundry. You may have a really interesting discussion with her, or you may convince her to do her own laundry. Either way you win!

DOT RESPONDS:

Forgive me, because you sound like such a cool mother, but I just don't think the

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MEDIAWATCH

Clarabel Ventura, Diane Sawyer, and How to Humiliate Poor Women on TV

Stories of Media Scapegoating of Welfare Recipients

By Betty Reid Mandell

When I think of media treatment of welfare recipients, two names spring to mind—Clarabel Ventura and Diane Sawyer.

Remember Clarabel Ventura of Boston? She became a lightning rod that attracted the nation's accumulated hatred of welfare mothers and poor people when in February 1994 she was accused of scalding her four-year-old son's hand and failing to get treatment for him. This happened at the same time that legislators at both the state and national level were debating how to reform welfare. Politicians and talk show hosts seized on the case to illustrate the need for reform. Then Republican Governor Bill Weld and Democratic legislators in Massachusetts portrayed Ventura as symptomatic of a welfare system gone awry, arguing that their competing welfare-overhaul plans would "break the cycle of dependency that had sustained three generations of the Ventura family" (*Boston Globe*, 2/16/94). The state senate rushed to amend a bill so it would cut off welfare benefits to mothers who have multiple children. (That "Family Cap" bill is now in effect—children who are born after a mother is on welfare are denied benefits.)

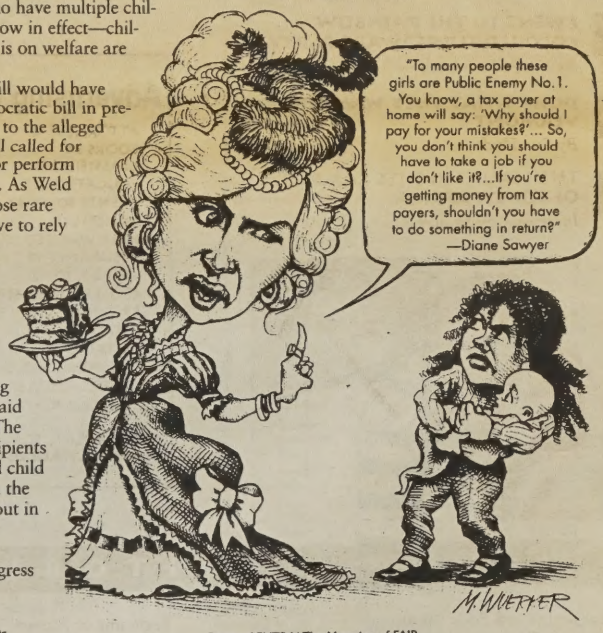
Weld claimed that his welfare bill would have been more effective than the Democratic bill in preventing the circumstances that led to the alleged abuse of the Ventura child. His bill called for requiring recipients to find work or perform workfare after 60 days on welfare. As Weld told the *Globe*, "This is one of those rare instances where I think you do have to rely on a more coercive, rather than a less coercive, government attitude toward social problems. You have to say to people, 'You must work,' or a lot of people, particularly someone with the personal problems such as drug or alcohol dependency, is not going to be a volunteer." (Ventura was said to be addicted to crack cocaine.) The Democratic plan also required recipients to work, but would have provided child care and other support services. In the end, the more punitive plan won out in August 1995, putting in place a two-year time limit on welfare. A year later, in August 1996, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility Act that ended AFDC as a federal entitlement program and gave it to the states in block grants.

The tabloid papers had a field day with Clarabel Ventura, and the *Globe* was not far behind them in its salacious treatment of the story. I counted 22 stories about it in the *Globe* between February 15, 1994 and August 12, 1995, in addition to an editorial, an op. ed. piece, and a letter to the editor.

On February 20, 1994 *Globe* staff reporter Charles M. Sennott published a story entitled "Finding Four Generations sustained by Welfare," in which he gave details about the intergenerational reliance on welfare of this Puerto Rican family. He estimated that "the welfare recipients in this extended family of about 100 could be costing state and federal taxpayers from $1 million a year." Joseph Gallant, commissioner of the Department of Welfare, tried to bring some rationality into the argument by pointing out that Clarabel and the Ventura family are statistical aberrations. "The average person (on welfare) is not addicted to crack, doesn't abuse their kids, and doesn't have that large a family," said Gallant. "In fact, the statistical average is a white woman without a high school diploma, without job experience, and less than two kids."

Globe columnist Mike Barnacle summed up the feeding frenzy: "Ventura has passed beyond the boundaries of news. Today, she is part of local lore. . . . she has done for the welfare debate what Willie Horton accomplished for the prison furlough program, sent it crashing and burning to the basement where the mere mention of the woman's name—Clarabel—immediately invokes the darker spirits within us: Everyone getting assistance is a dirty, rotten, fat, lazy, no-good minority fraud simply intent on breeding and scamming a check, all the while laughing at the rest of us who work hard to support them."

Barnacle continued, "Never mind that it is not true. Never mind that most people don't want to be on welfare and nobody ever grew up dreaming about or hoping to be poor in America" ("Ventura Fated To Be a Symbol," *Globe* 10/6/94). Yet, despite his understanding of the scapegoating that was going on, Barnacle pounded another nail in the welfare coffin when he said that welfare "was an idea born out of the best of intentions that became so badly abused it ought to have been junked years back."


"To many people these girls are Public Enemy No. 1. You know, a tax payer at home will say: 'Why should I pay for your mistakes?'... So, you don't think you should have to take a job if you don't like it?...If you're getting money from tax payers, shouldn't you have to do something in return?"
—Diane Sawyer
M. WERTHER

Cover of EXTRA! The Magazine of FAIR
May/June 1995 Vol. 8, No.3

The only op. ed. piece about Ventura in the *Globe* was written by a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and was predictably conservative, citing yet another case of child neglect by AFDC mothers in Chicago. (Cases of neglect of children by AFDC mothers were popping up all over the nation in 1994 and 1995.) Only one recipient was interviewed for any of the *Globe* stories, Dellamarie Morrison of the Coalition for Basic Human Needs, and she was given seven lines of coverage. One advocate, Betsy Wright of the Mass. Coalition for Human Services, was given five lines. Jane Collins, a welfare rights advocate, wrote a strong response to a letter to the editor that said the state should take away children of poor mothers rather than supplement their income. Others wrote letters as well, but the *Globe* didn't print them.

I lost a friend over Clarabel Ventura. My husband

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EDITORIAL NOTES

Sexual Rights and Pride 2000

This is *Sojourner*'s annual issue on lesbian, bisexual, transgender themes. We take the "Sexual Rights" title from the South African Women's Health Project, which has launched an exciting campaign to define and secure sexual rights for all people. Please see the article on p. 11.

A very warm thank you goes to our wonderful sponsor for this issue, the Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation. *Sojourner* is very grateful for your support and for your dedication to funding progressive lesbian/bisexual/transgender projects for social change across the United States and around the world.

We would also like to note that we had planned for this edition to include a special focus on transgender issues. Due to the high volume of queries about articles, however, we have decided to extend the deadline until July 1. The transgender focus will now appear in our special summer double issue.

Special Summer Double Issue

Summer issue, you say? *Sojourner* will be producing a combined July/August issue this year, which will reach subscribers and stores just before the beginning of August. The special issue will focus on poetry and fiction and will include our quarterly reproductive rights supplement (in addition to the transgender focus).

Out 4 Laughs?

The rumors are true. There is no fabulous women's comedy night benefit this spring. (Maybe in the fall, or next year?, we can entice back our previous long-time stellar producer Kate Hogan . . . just a thought.)

Thank you, Justine

We would like to thank Justine Cassell for donating fantastic computer equipment when her workplace upgraded. Your gift is making an immense difference right this minute—thank you!

Corrections

The headline of Mariana Romo-Carmona's review of *Porque Hay Silencio* in the May issue should have read, "Rompiendo El Silencio." Our apologies for the error.

In addition, we would like to make the following corrections/notes about an article in that same issue by Marcia Gallo on "Lesbian Philanthropy." Under the section called "LGBT Foundations Growing," the sentence that begins, "But Cunningham notes" should have said that "only .5 percent of foundation dollars go to LGBT groups." The newest LGBT fund is in Peoria, Illinois. In the fourth paragraph, the line about Liberty Hill's new Los Angeles Lesbian and Gay Fund should read, "which had been established at the California Community Foundation in 1995." A quote from Christie Balka about LGBT groups in Philadelphia should have read, "In Philadelphia there are about a hundred LGBT groups. Of these, there are only two lesbian organizations with staff, and very part-time staff at best."

The director of the grants program for the Funding Exchange is Sandra M. Laureano. Finally, we would like to acknowledge David Becker as the person who established the OUT Fund at the Funding Exchange.

Thank you.

Sojourner
The Women's Forum

Volume 25, Number 10

Sojourner Truth
African American Feminist & Abolitionist, 1797 - 1883

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Sojourner is a feminist newspaper committed to publishing writing by and for women. We are committed to the elimination of sexism, racism, homophobia, economic injustice, and other forces that oppress and divide us. We especially encourage writing that challenges the oppressive assumptions and structures that shape our communities, locally, nationally, and internationally—writing that compels women to speak and act. Our goal is to create a forum for women to inform, challenge, and encourage each other. We often invite controversy because we believe that the changes we seek to promote are dependent on frank and open discussion of the problems and challenges we face.

Advertising Policy
Sojourner assumes no financial responsibility for failure to publish advertisements, incorrect placement, or typographical errors.

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All manuscripts and letters to the editor should be sent to: The Editor, Sojourner, 42 Seaverns Avenue, Boston, MA 02130. Letters should be no longer than two double-spaced pages. Include phone number and address. For other submissions, send SASE for guidelines and return of manuscripts.

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MediaWatch

Continued from page 2

Marvin and I were members of a film group, hosted by a high school teacher. He presented his class with a lesson plan that presented a *Globe* article on Clarabel Ventura. It was an article that described the extended family in the most unfavorable light. As "balance," he presented a short letter to the editor by my husband which talked about corporate welfare and said "the media has done everything they can to divert the public's attention from the real thieves. While the present targets are poor women and children, I predict that the next targets will be the old" (*West Roxbury Transcript*, 3/2/94).

Our teacher friend believed that he had presented his class with balanced facts on which to make a decision about welfare. We argued angrily over this, and later Marvin sent the following letter to him:

In 1842 P. T. Barnum, in full realization of who was getting born every minute, pasted together a monkey top and a fish bottom, picked up Tom Thumb, Chang and Eng, and a few more freaks, and made some money. But he managed his money badly and eventually went broke. Pulitzer and Hearst, however, learned from him and made huge fortunes with freak show journalism. The other day on "Sixty Minutes" Andy Rooney suggested that Charles Kuralt was leaving television because the quality of news shows is declining (perhaps due, in part, to pressures from "Current Affairs," "Inside Edition," and "Hard Copy").

As you know, I have never made up a lesson plan, but it's hard to see what kind of lesson you were offering students by putting a freak list next to my article. You could have offered an article by Moynihan, Will, Ellwood, or Glazer that would have been a reasoned discussion with conclusions exactly opposite mine. Instead, you chose the freak show.

You can't believe that the Venturas are the norm. You said that some kids in your class are on welfare. How do you think they felt? Speaking as one who grew up in extreme poverty, I can tell you: most probably felt ashamed and helpless. But knowing very well that this economy does not—and will not—offer full employment, you and Clinton and Weld should feel the shame.

We never returned to the film group (we started our own) and haven't spoken to our former friend since then.

And what happened to Clarabel Ventura? She was arrested and charged with mayhem and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon: a boiling liquid. She jumped bail and went to the Dominican Republic to give birth to her seventh child, explaining that she had fled because she feared that the state would take away this child as they had taken away her other children. She explained that she had not taken her child for treatment after he was burned because she feared the state would take away her children. She accused her former boyfriend of burning the child and said he had threatened to kill her if she reported him. He was indicted on the same charges as Ventura, but apparently not jailed. Ventura was given a ten to twelve year prison sentence in August 1994 and would be eligible for parole in about six years. Her brother told reporters, "The Department of Social Services was supposed to be there for her. To myself, she is not to be blamed. If they had been there to help her this would not have happened. That's what they are there for, right?" (*Globe*, 2/20/94).

Diane Sawyer & How to Humiliate Poor Women on TV

FAIR, a media watch organization, did a superb analysis of media coverage of welfare in the nation from December 1, 1994 to February. 24, 1995 (*EXTRA!* May/June 1995, pp. 13-19). This was a critical period when conservatives were waging a public relations campaign to discredit AFDC in the public's mind so they could dismantle it as an entitlement program. Diane Sawyer, whose annual salary is about $7 million, represented a prime example of the media trashing of welfare recipients. On her program "ABC Prime Time Live" (2/16/95), she grilled a group of teenage mothers receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Here is a description of the encounter from *EXTRA!*:

Explaining that "to many people, these girls are public enemy No. 1," Sawyer harangued them on behalf of "taxpayers" who were "mad as hell." "Answer their question," she demanded: "Why should they pay for your mistake?"
One young woman commented that AFDC is "such a small percentage now, you know, of the amount of money of what taxpayers send in. Most of the money is going for defense." It's not a point that Sawyer followed up on.

Most of the welfare recipients I've seen on TV shows reflect public stereotypes of what a recipient is like. I've often wondered where they find these atypical people—did they get them from central casting?

In the face of such hostility, it is no surprise that many welfare recipients are reluctant to talk with reporters. In fact, they usually are not the first people that reporters seek out. Generally reporters first seek out welfare officials, politicians, and legislators for opinions. Then they turn to advocates at professional organizations, such as legal services. Yet from time to time, advocates are asked for the names of welfare recipients who are willing to be interviewed. I once received such a call from "Chronicle," a Boston area TV show. I called some recipients I knew. One woman, who was a victim of domestic abuse, did not want her face to appear or her identity known, but she would be willing to speak anonymously if her face was disguised. The reporter would not do this. Another woman said she had vowed after her last experience never to speak to a reporter again. In his article, the reporter had made some derogatory comment about her clothing.

Most of the welfare recipients I've seen on TV shows reflect public stereotypes of what a recipient is like. I've often wondered where they find these atypical people—do they get them from central casting? Despite the fact that the majority of recipients are white, the majority of interviewees have

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Dot & Flo

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average teen wants to talk to their parents. Oh, but sex—now there's a sure-fire topic to break the ice. So if you want my advice, what I would do is act like I didn't see the condoms. Please do not be so cool and so coy and casually mention in that revolting affirming way, "Oh, by the way, honey, I noticed you're using Trojan condoms. Those were always my favorites." And don't go pushing the damn diaphragm—it's so '70s. It embarrasses me to even have to tell you this! (But you did write to us, so in my book you're asking for it.)
It would be a different story if you and your daughter had never talked about sex. It is critical that she talk with someone caring and reliable about pregnancy, birth control, and relationships—remind her about that. But it doesn't have to be you. Just let her know you and your speculum are still there.

Giant Sucking Sounds; The Diary of a Mad Activist

By Susie Day

MONDAY—Picketed the courthouse all day to save abortion rights. Once again was confronted by rabid rightwing Christians, most of whom—strangely, given their behavior—believe that apes had nothing to do with the development of human beings. That's OK; nobody accepts MY belief that humanity is descended from corporate attorneys. Capitalism sucks, man. But then, so does that huge industrial vacuum cleaner I just tripped over in the hall downstairs.

I hope it won't stay there long; that hall is only about a yard wide, and the vacuum, including its black plastic hose (big enough to suck up old paint cans and dead rats) takes up almost all the space. Oh well. Note to self: Don't Mourn; Organize!

TUESDAY—Spent day politically brooding. Millennium March organizers say that gays are people too because we're "intensely brand loyal and hyperacquisitive." Didn't anybody notice that hundreds of queers went to jail for protesting world hunger and the IMF only a few blocks from where that stupid Millennium March took place? So please kiss my fat lesbo assets, shoppers.

Other than that, a nice day, except, of course, for multinational capitalism, AND having to squeeze past behemoth vacuum. Probably belongs to the woman downstairs. Note to self: Next time I Question Authority, must figure out what to ask it.

WEDNESDAY—Went to meeting tonight on Prison Industrial Complex and learned the hard way that not everybody who wants to Free Mumia is free from control issues. Yet we must continue to fight for justice! And in our fight, we must look with compassion on one another's deep psychological problems! I am glad my life has purpose. Not like that lunatic with the vacuum downstairs.

I fell down again getting in from work, thanks to that goddam "Shop Vak" in the hall. Whenever I pass that thing now, I secretly kick it a little. I wonder how long it's going to stay there. Note to self: Take a Neurotic to Lunch.

THURSDAY—Must get on with my work of worrying about global disasters, but can't, due to selfishness of downstairs "neighbor." This morning, I left a note on her door: "How long will this patriarchal vacuum of death colonize the hall, O Yankee Stooge of Imperialism?" Simple, upbeat whimsy, which I assumed would elicit a loving answer. But tonight, back home, I find she's left a nasty message on my answering machine: "I did NOT appreciate your sarcasm, and I will NOT move that vacuum."

Harmony. That's her name. Tiny, bottle-blonde, 50-ish, nasal-voiced "Harmony." She can't help herself: Harmony is what happens after one works eleven years as a telemarketer. She says her Shop Vak will stay there because "it was a gift from my ex-husband and it was rotting away in the basement and I don't know where else to put it."

Note to self: Triumph over sarcasm by not telling Harmony where she can put her Shop Vak. Instead, send her white light and healing energy. The stupid cow.

FRIDAY—NEGATIVITY! EVERYWHERE, NEGATIVE ENERGY! Police brutality rampant! We must stop it! Healing is crucial! Harmony and I should work together to fight the police state!

Today, I tacked a note to Harmony's door, in which I offered to forgive her and stop dropping my door knob collection over her bedroom if she would just move her Shop Vak to the TOP FLOOR, where nobody will trip over it.

Note to Self: Think globally; act out locally.

It's now late at night, and Harmony has not responded.

Note to self: Sit on stoop reading *The Wretched of the Earth* when Harmony passes, so that she will see me and be wracked by feelings of intellectual and political inferiority. Then maybe she'll wig out and I'll have to call the cops.

SATURDAY—Still no answer from Harmony. How can she be so selfish! When Nicaragua has the worst economy in Central America!

Somehow, I feel that if I can convince Harmony that she is the world's biggest loser, the Earth will be saved. Off now to my Rainforest Affinity group.

Daily affirmation: "Every day the Shop Vak remains downstairs, I grow happier and Harmony's ass grows some sort of vicious new jungle parasite."

SUNDAY—Woke up at 4 a.m., after horrid dream of being inhaled by giant uterus, and realized that Harmony was there: lying on the floor beneath me, her neon-yellow hair snaking across her mildewed pillow; her hatred of me pulsating through the floorboards. My GAWD, I thought, why didn't I see this before? Harmony is HOMOPHOBIC.

Of course! As a heterosexual, Harmony instinctively knows that if she left the Shop Vak down on the FIRST floor, where the LANDLORD and his WIFE live, she'd be killing other straight people, not an expendable lesbian! Oh, she's got it all figured out.

So at 5 a.m. I went downstairs and did a lengthy clog dance outside Harmony's door to let her know I will NOT take her heterosexist bullshit. Then I hung a sign on her vacuum, saying "THIS MACHINE SUCKS LESBIANS." Note to self: Think globally; act out locally.

MONDAY—Another week begins, and still World Bank drains our life force. But the Shop Vak is gone.

That's because I carried it downstairs and put it in front of the landlord's door. Where he tripped over it on his way to work and broke his leg. Boy, is Harmony in trouble! (Although she's still quite privileged, compared to anyone in, say, the war-torn Balkans.)

Note to self: Visit Harmony and offer to vacuum her apartment. It's what Gandhi would have wanted.

Susie Day is a really fine friend and a wonderful neighbor. That is because she has given up activism and assumed a new identity under the Witness Protection Program. She sends her love.

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Honor the Labor and Dreams of Women

Welfare rights, labor activists, and mothers participated in the sixth annual Mothers' March on May 15. The event is held each year to "honor the labor and dreams of women, support families struggling in poverty, and fight for policies that honor our moms." Sponsors of the march included the Coalition for Basic Human Needs and Working Massachusetts.

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MediaWatch

Continued from page 4

been black.

Despite the fact that welfare recipients have an average of a little under two children, a disproportionate number of interviewees have large numbers of children. On her TV program, Judge Judy interviewed a woman with seven children by three different fathers—and the woman said she wanted to have twelve children. Sally Jessy Raphael interviewed a mother with ten children. (Boston welfare activist and former recipient Dottie Stevens remembers a radio talk show where a reporter said that his mother, "God rest her soul," worked three jobs, brought up thirteen kids, and died at the age of 51. He said, "If my mother could do it, so could you.")

Even the working poor have not escaped the media charge that they have too many children. Boston welfare activist and former ecipient Laura Walker joined Stevens for an appearance on the "Paul Bloom" talk show, along with a Latino couple who were poor despite the fact that they worked three jobs. They had never received AFDC, although they did receive food stamps. They were told by people in the audience that they wouldn't be poor if they didn't have so many children. (The woman was pregnant with her seventh child.)

Despite the fact that the vast majority of welfare recipients don't smoke crack cocaine, abuse or neglect their children, or get evicted from their apartments for criminal behavior, disproportionate numbers of interviewees who did all these things have been paraded before the public.

And, despite the fact that only six percent of recipients are under the age of twenty, a disproportionate number of teenage parents have been interviewed. In a *Newsweek* article (12/12/94), Jonathan Alter said that "every threat to the fabric of this country" can be traced to unmarried teenage women. He frankly gloried in the theme of "shame" for poor young women, comparing them to "drunk drivers," and claiming, according to the *EXTRA!* special issue, that "the public is game for a little humiliation."

The public did, indeed, seem game for more than a little humiliation. Dottie Stevens, who ran for governor of Massachusetts in 1990, tells of a panel presentation she was on. The wife of Ray Shamie, head of the GOP, accused her of poisoning her own child to get on welfare. She said to Stevens, "What did you do—sit on your fat ass and feed your kid paint chips?"

Howie Carr, a vicious talk show host, referring to TV coverage of a welfare rights demonstration at the Massachusetts State House that showed some large women, called them the "gimmee girls" with fat asses. He described them as greedy and lazy overeaters. He accused them of physically charging at state troopers, when in fact the troopers were charging the women and using undue force on them.

Stevens also tells of an interview with a Channel 5 TV reporter in Boston, focused on food stamps. The reporter suggested that Stevens walk to her refrigerator and open it up to show that it was empty. She asked the reporter to edit that shot out as she did not want her rear end featured on TV. The reporter promised he would do that, but he didn't.

Can't Win for Losing

The welfare mothers can't win. If they dress well, they are criticized. We all want to look our best when we're on TV, but when a group of welfare mothers appeared on "60 Minutes," they were criticized by viewers for wearing "designer glasses" and a silk blouse. One viewer asked how they had the nerve to talk about poverty when they could afford those clothes. (There is a similar Catch 22 when welfare mothers use food stamps at the supermarket. If they buy roast beef, former Democratic Governor Dukakis's wife and people in the line will criticize them; if they buy Twinkies and Oreos, people will criticize them for not feeding their children well.) Stevens comments that if welfare mothers have dignity and are articulate and well groomed with their hair done, people get mad because this forces them to face the fact that they too might have to rely on welfare.

Despite the fact that welfare recipients have an average of a little under two children, a disproportionate number of interviewees have large numbers of children. On her TV program, Judge Judy interviewed a woman with seven children by three different fathers—and the woman said she wanted to have twelve children. Sally Jessy Raphael interviewed a mother with ten children.

The mothers are set up by the media. Sometimes they are asked to participate in a TV show without being told in advance what will happen to them. They often become targets for audience hostility. Laura Walker says that the host of the "Paul Bloom" show assured her in advance that the format would be educational and objective. But when she got there, there was a guy going around the audience prompting them to ask "go get them" types of questions. Questions were rude, many of them about sexual promiscuity. An African American mother burst out in tears after a particularly mean comment. One TV host told the welfare mothers, "This is not going to be easy. You have to fight to get your message out."

At a media workshop sponsored by Mass Action for Women, I recently met *Herald* columnist Margery Egan. I had mentioned the media treatment of Clarabel Ventura and made some negative comments in the workshop about media stereotyping. Egan was furious at my remarks. She said, "We don't stereotype. We are very sensitive to these issues." She went on to say, "The advocates are their own worst enemies. They don't know what kind of stories to give us that will get a sympathetic response from the readers."

As an example of an inappropriate story, she told of a child care advocate giving her a story about a Cape Verdean mother who wanted to work part-time but couldn't get a child care voucher. Egan said this was inappropriate on two counts. Most people couldn't identify with a Cape Verdean woman, and most people would wonder why the woman couldn't work full time. Egan herself is a single mother holding down two jobs. She thought the entire problem of getting women to work could be solved if there were more day care. She was not interested in my discussion of women's inadequate education, the high rate of mothers' and children's disabilities, the high rate of domestic abuse, the low wages that women get—wages that don't raise their families out of poverty, etc.. And she certainly wouldn't be sympathetic to the idea of a universal children's allowance or Guaranteed Annual Income. Egan's opinions reflect the dominant ideology about welfare these days—get them to work!

Welfare recipients have received very sympathetic treatment from alternative media, including *Sojourner*, college radio stations at MIT and Boston College, New England Cable Access TV, *Dorchester Community News*, and other neighborhood newspapers. *Survival News* is exclusively devoted to getting the true welfare story out. The joint media project of *Sojourner* and *Survival News*, The Welfare Organizing Media Project, is working to influence the mainstream coverage of welfare and poverty issues. We plan to hold training sessions with welfare recipients to help them take control over how they are presented in the mainstream media.

Betty Reid Mandell has been a welfare rights activist since 1964. Her latest book is An Introduction to Human Services Policy and Practice, co-authored with Barbara Schram. She is one of the founders of Survivors, Inc., which publishes Survival News, a newspaper by and for poor people. She is also a member of Sojourner's Welfare-Beat committee.

Organizing Korean Americans Against Homophobia

By Judy Han

"Homosexual laws are laws of death and destruction: 80 percent of homosexuals eventually die from AIDS, syphilis, infection in the intestines, Hepatitis B, and other sexually transmitted diseases. Biblical, historical, and medical evidences prove that homosexuality results in condemnation, death, and judgment."
—Peter Kim, Coordinator of the Sexual Responsibility Act Committee

When I came out to my parents as a lesbian nearly ten years ago, they went through a lot of what other parents of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) children experience: they blamed themselves, they blamed me, and they grieved the loss of the daughter they thought they had. And like other working-class immigrant parents whose sense of community relies heavily on family and church, my parents felt alone, and they found no resource available in Korean.

There was only one person they trusted enough to turn to, and it was Reverend Lee Chang-sun at The First Wilshire United Methodist Church in Los Angeles. My father had been attending Rev. Lee's church since he first arrived alone in the United States in 1980, and when the rest of our family immigrated in 1984, Wilshire UMC became our home church, too. My parents took an active leadership role, both becoming deacons over the years. My brother and sister taught Sunday School, and my sister married at this church. Rev. Lee comforted my parents about my homosexuality: "It's okay—we're all sinners and need forgiveness."

In December 1999, Rev. Lee was among 267 prominent Korean American religious and civic leaders in Southern California who organized a large-scale petition drive to place the California Defense of Sexual Responsibility Act (CDSRA) on the November 2000 ballot—an effort described by its author as "an opportunity to launch a torpedo toward the radical homosexual destroyer."

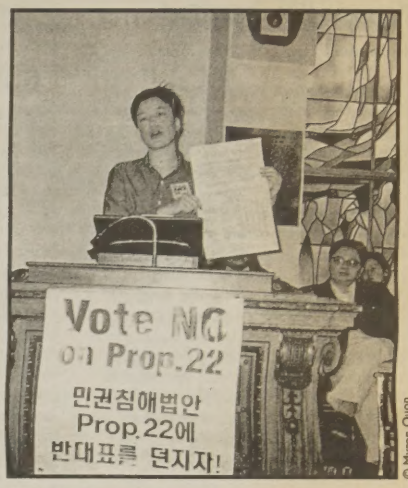
CDSRA Background

I first found out about CDSRA in Korean language newspapers that announced the first public meetings about the act in December 1999. It was widely reported that hundreds of Korean American religious leaders as well as civic leaders like Charles Kim of the Korean American Coalition (a national civil rights organization) were in attendance—joined by Christian Coalition representatives, California Senator Pete Knight (author of anti-gay Proposition 22, a.k.a. "the Knight Initiative"), and Richard Mountjoy (author of the anti-immigrant Prop 187). A roster of 267 Korean-American names was soon published in a full-page ad that included a copy of the CDSRA petition, and in the weeks following, more than a dozen articles appeared in the Korean language media about "homosexual special rights" and church petition drives. A few of my friends who work in Koreatown were handed the petition at their workplace, and I've heard that teachers and parents were also actively collecting signatures.

Authored by a retired Orange County engineer named Lee Olson, CDSRA sought to "prohibit public entities from endorsing, educating, recognizing or promoting homosexuality as acceptable, moral behavior." CDSRA's website further explained the goals of the initiative as an effort to "prohibit public entities from including the phrase 'sexual orientation' in any law, regulation, rule, ordinance, code, policy, resolution, declaration, or proclamation" because it argued that "sexual orientation is the rubric used to instill the false concept that homo-sexuality [sic] is an immutable human characteristic," and because "sexual orientation is also a euphemism used to mask the offensiveness of homosexuality and other unnatural forms of sexual relations."

CDSRA proponents specifically pointed to a set of anti-discrimination bills enacted into California law in January 2000—including those protecting students in public schools from anti-gay bias, ensuring fair housing and employment for LGBT Californians, and providing health insurance for domestic partners of state employees. Claiming that these were "special rights," CDSRA proponents argued that LGBT activists were mandating acceptance to a degree that denied Christians their religious freedom and moral prerogative. CDSRA organizers, particularly Reverend Peter Kim—who acted as the Korean American coordinator—used familiar statistics to dismiss LGBT rights. For instance, a 1996 poll commissioned by the rightwing Family Research Council found that more than four out of five Americans (83 percent) answered that homosexuals "should not be given special protections." A 1998 poll conducted by The Claremont Institute, a conservative think tank based in California, found that 53 percent of Californians believed that "homosexual conduct, such as sodomy between two men, was never morally right." These questionable research "findings" and other medical-biblical condemnations of homosexuality appeared repeatedly in mainstream and Christian Korean language media.

CDSRA needed to collect 419,260 signatures of registered voters, an unlikely goal for a campaign with no organized staff, no fundraising, and no major endorsement outside the Korean American community—which only has about 50,000 registered voters in Southern California. As expected, CDSRA failed to qualify as a ballot initiative, but as feared, the momentum built around CDSRA helped the right wing to mobilize support for Proposition 22, the initiative banning same-sex marriage that was recently approved by California voters. [See "California Knightmare" by Kate Raphael, *Sojourner*, Vol. 25, No. 8, April 2000.] Weeks before the March election, Peter Kim and other conservative Korean American Christians were being courted by Proposition 22 backers who wanted to demonstrate that Asian American communities supported them.



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Judy Han unveils the media campaign at KACR Press Conference in Los Angeles on January 17, 2000.

The Korean American Christian Right

According to March 2000 figures released by the Korean General Consulate, there are approximately two million Korean Americans in the United States, of which an estimated 31.7 percent (650,000) reside in Southern California. It is estimated that nearly 80 percent of Korean Americans in California attend almost a thousand Korean American churches in Los Angeles County, Orange County, and San Diego County. Many of

Continued on next page

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Korean/LGBT Organizing

Continued from previous page

these churches are massive in scale—Young Nak Presbyterian Church boasts 10,000 members, and the Oriental Mission Church claims 4,500 members—and many are involved in multimillion dollar expansion projects.

Korean American churches are predominantly Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Evangelical, with Catholics in the minority. Remarkably, CDSRA brought together ministers and congregations of all Protestant denominations, despite the fact that Korean churches are usually divided strictly along denominational lines and are rife with institutional and ideological rivalries. More significantly, CDSRA became the first statewide political campaign to extensively involve Korean American churches, much to the dismay of many who have long sought to activate the Christian community on pressing issues like immigration, welfare reform, and bilingual education.

There are certainly dissenting opinions on gay issues within many Christian institutions, with some working to build churches that accept and embrace LGBT members. The National Religious Leadership Roundtable (NRLR)—an interfaith network of leaders from pro-LGBT faith, spiritual, and religious organizations—is a case in point. Unfortunately, there are no progressive, justice-oriented ministries in support of LGBT rights among the heavily immigrant Korean American and other Asian American churches in Southern California, and networks like NRLR do not actively work in immigrant communities of color. In a climate that irrefutably equates homophobia with Christianity, it's difficult to engage Korean American Christians in even the most elementary discussions about LGBT rights. Even moderate and liberal Korean Americans who otherwise support civil rights were hesitant to condemn CDSRA or voice their support for LGBT rights because they feared that their actions would directly contradict Christian beliefs. Most mainstream Korean American community-based organizations declined to take a stand against CDSRA partly because they did not want to antagonize the Christian churches.

The Christian Coalition has denied that it played a leadership role in mobilizing the Korean American community, but the organization is unabashed about the base-building potential demonstrated by CDSRA. California Christian Coalition Director Miriam Archer told *AsianWeek* in January 2000, "I always knew a great many Koreans were devout believers. This is going to get a lot more Korean people to register to vote. It'll be a great thing for America." Archer estimated that Korean churches registered 15,000 to 20,000 new voters during CDSRA, and noted that a Korean American chapter of the California Christian Coalition formed on December 3, 1999.

LGBT Organizing and Korean Americans

Many progressive activists have pointed out that the mainstreaming of LGBT politics and the ongoing focus on securing same-sex marriage walk dangerously closely with the rightwing rhetoric of "family values." Because mandating and enforcing marriage is also a national Korean pastime, the Korean media has disproportionately focused on LGBT marriage as well—as though all we want is to get married and have children, *just like everyone else*. Moreover, in personal conversations with immigrant LGBT Korean Americans, I've found that most have little interest in LGBT politics or activism—many of them really just want the right to marry and prove that LGBT relationships could be stable and respectable.

Many immigrant LGBT Korean Americans in Southern California attend conservative churches, and even when their own ministers publicly condemned homosexuality in the context of CDSRA, they themselves could not raise criticism. Most remain in the closet—their identities and relationships hidden from family, workplace, and church. It's clear that the "me too" politics of mainstream LGBT organizing—securing a "piece of the pie" without broader commitment to social change—is ineffective when people who are most directly affected by the injustices are also the least likely to speak up. When I was trying to mobilize community support for a press conference to denounce CDSRA in January, for instance, my invitations were mostly met with surprise and fear by closeted queer Korean Americans. Most of them were surprised that *anyone* would publicly support LGBT rights, and most of them couldn't even add their names to a counter-ad campaign. Assurances that they wouldn't be outed, and that they would be joined by hundreds of straight people did not comfort them—many of them simply had too much at stake.

Generally speaking, there is a serious gap between immigrant LGBT Korean Americans and the mostly U.S.-raised Korean Americans, including the so-called "1.5 generation" like myself. Those of us who grew up and came out in the United States generally have had some access to mainstream LGBT cultures and politics, whether it's watching Ellen come out on TV or joining in pride marches. And if we're lucky, we know about queer communities of color—beyond the mainstream Castro and West Hollywood scenes—and the intersections of progressive and queer politics. On the other hand, while national LGBT efforts are trying to hold Dr. Laura accountable, immmigrant LGBT Korean Americans have to listen to their own minister deliver sermons about the evils of homosexuality, and watch in silence while their own family members sign anti-gay petitions. It hurts immeasurably more when it's right in your "home." The problem isn't that Korean culture is somehow "more homophobic"—there is an active LGBT social and political movement gaining momentum in South Korea—but rather that there is a serious disconnect between the immigrant and mainstream communities. While hundreds of thousands of Korean Americans were signing CDSRA petitions, for instance, mainstream LGBT organizations—with a few exceptions—seemed to view CDSRA petition drives as primarily a Korean American issue, and only secondarily an LGBT issue.

In a community meeting to oppose CDSRA held in January, a straight activist who had recently arrived from Korea said that he was angry at Korean American churches for supporting CDSRA, but what infuriated him even more was the silence on the part of LGBT communities. Of course, he was completely insensitive about the reality of violence and fear that produce that silence, but his anger also illustrated that a new LGBT organizing model had to emerge. It is still imperative to have LGBT leadership at the core, but there has to be a visible critical mass—including significant participation by straight community members—in order to organize publicly and demand justice. Past experiences have shown the limitations of relying on the few out LGBT figureheads. And in our case, building a broad-based, gay-straight alliance with organizations that might not ordinarily prioritize LGBT issues was very much a necessity.

Korean Americans For Civil Rights

Korean Americans for Civil Rights (KACR) formed in response to CDSRA, and committed ourselves to educating the Korean American community about anti-LGBT initiatives, raising community awareness about LGBT issues, and fostering a long-term alliance in the Korean American community to work on progressive social issues. Those of us who work in progressive social justice movements believe that the Christian right was attempting to galvanize a base in California by using anti-gay bigotry. In particular, the right was working to regain the ground it had lost in the Korean community and other communities of color due to its attacks on immigrants, people of color, women, and poor people through initiatives like the anti-immigrant Prop. 187, anti-affirmative action Prop. 209, and anti-bilingual education Prop. 227. We knew that fostering homophobia and bigotry in the Korean American community would help the right to pass Prop. 22, and we wanted to stop them from further expanding their divisive strategy in our communities. We also wanted to hold our own community accountable for their bigotry.

By positioning LGBT rights not as a special interest or a plea for tolerance of an otherwise unpalatable "lifestyle," but as a righteous campaign for civil rights that concerned all community members, we reframed the debate and linked LGBT issues with other U.S. and Korean social justice issues.

The organizing committee consisted of Korean Americans and other Asian Americans, and it was a gay-straight alliance from the start. Some worked primarily with the immigrant Korean American communities, while some worked in other advocacy organizations. While Korean Americans took the lead in working with Korean language media, other Asian Americans played a significant role in strategizing and coordinating other aspects of the campaign. In less than a month, KACR held joint press conferences in Los Angeles and San Francisco, published two full-page counter-ads, and collected over 300 individual signatures and almost 30 organizational endorsements for the media campaign. We mobilized community actions in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and prompted plans for building a progressive network in places like New York City where the sizable Korean American Christian community certainly has the potential to organize around a rightwing agenda in the future.

The success of Korean Americans for Civil Rights depended on building a coalition of many groups who had not worked together before—Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Gay Asian Pacific Support Network, Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates, Korean Resource Center, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, and the National Center for Lesbian Rights. It was clear that queer Asian American organizing needed to move beyond simply building internal support networks, and we demanded that straight people actively participate in fighting homophobia.

I think the significance of KACR was manifold. First of all, KACR was a direct and grassroots response to the first explicitly anti-gay organizing efforts in the history of the Korean American community in California, and possibly in the United States. Second, we convened a diverse gay-straight alliance of activists and organizations who worked together to challenge homophobia. Third, by positioning LGBT rights not as a special interest or a plea for tolerance of an otherwise unpalatable "lifestyle," but as a righteous campaign for civil rights that concerned all community members, KACR reframed the debate and linked LGBT issues with other U.S. and Korean social justice issues. Lastly, KACR demonstrated a clear need for monitoring Korean and other "ethnic" language media, and a need to redefine the landscape of LGBT politics to include communities of color in substantial and meaningful ways. There is a tremendous opportunity for organizing around LGBT issues in both English-speaking and immigrant communities of color, and in order to be effective, mainstream LGBT movements must do more than provide occasional translations of informational pamphlets.

During the entire KACR campaign, I didn't ask my parents what they thought about CDSRA—I didn't want to know. I feared that they might have signed the petition themselves, either because they believed it was the Christian thing to do or because they felt obligated. I was regularly appearing in Korean language newspapers and even briefly debated a bigoted minister on television, so I felt tremendously responsible for what impact my visibility might have on my family's business and social relationships.

I found out in early January that my parents did not participate in the petition drive. In fact, they were quite upset about it. My sister told me that my father had refused to sign the petition, asking how he could spit in his own daughter's face. When she expressed concern about her in-laws finding out about me, she was scolded for not being more supportive because, as my parents put it, I was doing important work. My parents felt deeply betrayed by their church and their minister—a couple of months later, they left their church of almost twenty years for another church. It was more than I could have asked for—it was a gesture of tremendous support and recognition. It was a sure sign of change and progress.

For more information:
Korean Americans for Civil Rights (KACR) http://www.otherwise.net/justice/

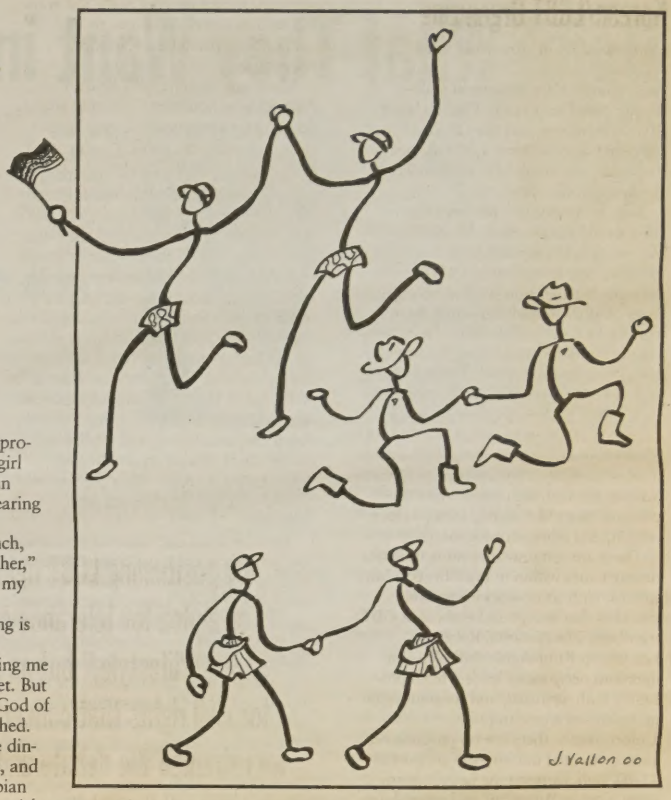
California Defense of Sexual Responsibility Act (CDSRA) http://www.sexual-orientation.com

Judy Han is a lesbian activist who worked as the campaign coordinator for Korean Americans for Civil Rights (KACR). She's a freelance writer, illustrator, and design consultant, and serves as a member of the Community Funding Panel of Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation. She maintains a Korean LGBT website at <http://www.otherwise.net/hanQ/>.

I Went to the Rainbow Colored Tupperware Party

Millennium March Musings

By Karen Pittelman



The fact is, I agreed with the people who called for a boycott of the Millennium March. Criticisms that the event had all the signs of being one giant marketing extravaganza made by and for well-off white people didn't exactly make me want to jump on a plane and be first in line. And while I do love Chaka Khan, just one of the many performers scheduled for "Equality Rocks," it seemed there might be more important things to do with all this energy and money. But then I heard that there would be around half a million people heading to Washington. I couldn't help thinking—that sure is a lot of girls. I know, I know, politics is not a pick-up scene. Still, I was long overdue for a visit to my fabulous D.C. friend Patrick, and I was getting pretty tired of Boston's April snow. Everyone knows that there's nothing like the sight of hundreds of thousands of queer girls dancing to pull you out of winter slump and into spring.

I got into town Saturday afternoon: the sun was shining, it was warm, I was happy. It was a perfect day to stroll around DuPont Circle with Patrick and check out the crowd. My mood changed though as we walked past a tiny store swarming with people. Here was the certain answer to the question of commercialization, if I had ever had any doubts. Millennium March tank tops. Millennium March key chains. Even rainbow colored steering wheel covers. It was like one of those Times Square tourist shops that sells only batteries and Big Apple snow domes. Only, if we were tourists, where exactly were we visiting? The land of gay? Stacked in a corner of the store were some kind of official march programs. The cover image featured a black and white road leading up to the capitol with a big sparkly swoosh of rainbow painting a path along the bricks. I guess the idea was something like, "Follow the yellow brick road to justice!" Maybe all this rainbow paraphernalia was just Judy Garland worship gone one step too far? I tried not to think about more disturbing explanations, about how after generations of fight and blood, this store's existence could not have been the intended result. I should have known better than to be shocked after all the warnings, but still—since when did freedom become about buying a rainbow air freshener?

It was time to remind myself of why I was here, so Patrick and I got an outdoor table at a cafe and set ourselves up for watching the girls and boys go by. Unfortunately, before I could even begin to enjoy myself, I was startled by a strange phenomenon. Couple after couple was passing by in matching outfits. Now the only people I had ever seen do this before were my grandparents from Margate, Florida, who like to dress in coordinating leisure suits. Had bubbie fashion become queer chic? Was I really that out of the loop? Two women in elaborate Wyatt Earp-like western outfits with black vests and little black bow ties passed by. They were followed by a pair of boys in matching camouflage hot pants. I was starting to feel hopelessly out of place.

Then, suddenly, a vision appeared before me. Writer, editor, sex educator, porn producer. Goddess of kinkiness. Buttgirl herself. Yes, it was none other than Tristan Taormino. Tristan was wearing leather and had someone with a mohawk on a leash. This was much, much better. "You should follow her," said Patrick, wiping the drool off my chin.

"No, no," I mumbled, "gawking is enough for me."

"Oh, come on," he said, dragging me off my chair and out into the street. But like a vision from some gracious God of the freaks, they had already vanished.

By now it was time to get some dinner, put on our glamorous clothes, and go dancing. We ended up at a lesbian bar called the Hung Jury where Patrick didn't exactly fit in, though he's a good sport, and anyway I'm the guest so I get to pick. It was a great party with a million girls of all colors, from every state. Of course, everyone was dancing in pairs and wearing either matching white undershirts or matching strappy red dresses, but it was okay, I didn't care anymore. I'd given up my Casanova plans. If the march tomorrow could be like this bar of grooving, gorgeous girls, it would be impressive. No, it probably wouldn't accomplish much politically. But the feeling of real love and pride in the air was undeniable and that's never a bad thing. Still, if this was a so-called Lesbian, Gay, *Bisexual and Transgender* march, where *was* everybody else? For example, why was the only bisexual party the whole weekend way out in a suburb in Maryland? And where were all the polymorphously perverse?

Two women in elaborate Wyatt Earp-like western outfits with black vests and little black bow ties passed by. They were followed by a pair of boys in matching camouflage hot pants. I was starting to feel hopelessly out of place.

The Day Dawns . . .

It's three in the morning by the time we get home, and it's somewhat unpleasant to wake up at eight for the march. Soon, however, we are on our way, striding towards the Washington Monument while couples in fanny packs put sun block on each other's necks and adjust their Human Rights Campaign signs. To our right I notice a fenced-in area with a bunch of kids running around and just as many reporters watching them. A sign reads: Family Play Space. Patty and I stop to stare next to a bunch of other gawkers. We're all looking in through a seven-foot high fence—it's like the zoo the way they've caged them in. Like there must be a place to buy five cents worth of corn kernels to feed the cute, gay babies.

Finally we get to where everyone is lining up and a guy on a megaphone is calling out different groups' names. He calls out Hewlett Packard and there is a big cheer. I hear the Gay Pilots Association. I hear the state of Connecticut. I see a big mass of mostly white people wearing rainbow T-shirts. Patrick and I wander around aimlessly trying to figure out who to march with. He votes for a Mormon dads' group for reasons that I will not explain here. I'm not hoping for some perfectly tailored affinity group, but I'd at least like to be with the freaks. We walk up to a middle-aged Midwestern woman holding a list of groups. "What are you looking for?" she asks. I say biversity maybe or something like that. Is she actually offended or am I just being touchy?

We're soon tired of roaming and end up standing with Massachusetts because, well, I live there. Some men with a big sign that says Fags from Lesbianville ask us to take their picture, and they are pretty enthusiastic so that cheers me up. Then a cute girl starts talking to me about my silver lipstick. *Now* I'm getting somewhere, I think, and then suddenly we are moving. But just as the Massachusetts flag bearers are about to join the flow of marchers, some people with walkie-talkies and official-looking outfits order us to wait. We wait. People start to sit down and sip from their canteens. At least we can watch the march from here. I see a big sign that says Exxon, and I don't feel any surprise. Why shouldn't they send their own group? There's nothing happening here to make them feel anything but welcome. Still, I am relieved when I realize the sign actually says, "Boycott Exxon."

We can also see some hate protesters from where we're waiting. I spend a while trying to understand one big sign that says simply, "God/Fag=Rectum." *What?* Next to that is a sign with Matthew Shepard's picture and the scrawl, "Matt Burns in Hell." I try to imagine the man holding it before he came here, back on the day he got the idea to make it. I picture him looking through magazines for the photograph, sitting at the kitchen table using his kid's markers, maybe a little boy running by to get some orange juice from the refrigerator. He had to make a plan for this. He had to buy some poster board and some glue. The details behind the work of hate are just as quotidian as anything else.

By now I'm wondering if we're ever going to march when suddenly a pair of fabulous PVC purple pants catches my eye. I've seen these pants before—at the Best Lesbian Erotica reading this winter. I know they belong to the one and only Tristan Taormino. Could it really be her again?

Continued on page 26

Doin' What They Want in Vermont

By Sue Hyde

Ah, Vermont! The Green Mountain State. The most rural of the 50 United States.

First state to outlaw slavery (1777). First state to abolish the requirement that voters must be property owners (also 1777). Home of the nation's first Head Start Program. State insect: the honeybee. State political sport: Town Meeting. Informal state motto: In Vermont, We Do What We Want.

While lawmakers and policymakers in other states putt-putt along with minuscule and incremental changes in law and policy affecting gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) people, the lawmakers of Vermont burned rubber and gobbled up the competition with their historic "civil union" bill. To date, no state even approaches Vermont's progress in the area of GLBT civil rights. Ironically, that statement was true before the civil union bill was signed by the governor. The civil union bill just put even more distance between the Green Mountain State and everybody else.

So, what is this civil union thing anyway? Becoming available to the same-sex couples of Vermont this July, a civil union (CU) will give these couples the right to form state-sanctioned relationships. CU'ed couples will have access to more than 300 benefits, rights, and responsibilities currently available to heterosexual married couples, including the right to make medical decisions in case of emergency, transfer property to one's spouse, inherit from one's spouse without paying tax on the property, oversee funerals, and file joint state income tax returns. For those same-sex couples who wish to enter into a state-sanctioned relationship, the civil union status is as close as we can get to the m-word, without being married. Of course, for those of us who opt to be CU'ed, should we decide that CU bliss wasn't all it was cracked up to be, uncoupling will require the same kinds of state intervention as obtaining a divorce. What the state has joined together, let the state rend asunder!

Let's be clear: the Vermont civil union bill represents the most comprehensive and far-reaching form of GLBT family recognition in the United States. At the same time, the civil union status—invented by Vermont lawmakers to both satisfy the state supreme court ruling of December 1999, and to avoid the emotional and political pyrotechnics that would have accompanied an extension of the state's marriage laws to same-sex couples—cannot be carried by Vermonters to other states. Oh dear, that sounds rather viral, doesn't it? That's just what the rightwing activists in Vermont would have us believe: the civil union status, as faux marriage, comes so close to the real prize that it amounts to a toxic spill contaminating the good upright citizens of all the other states. Despite the conservative fantasy of creeping homosexualism, the reality is a bit less dramatic. Vermont civil unions will be recognized in Vermont. It is very unlikely that a CU'ed couple would be able to access the 300-plus rights, benefits, and responsibilities in any other state, until and unless another state establishes its own CU status.

Polls show that the rightwing organizers who want to overturn the Vermont civil union bill might be in for a bumpy ride.

In the meantime, of course, our enemies on the right will be doing their very best: 1) to punish the Vermont lawmakers who supported the CU bill, 2) to push a constitutional amendment banning CU status and striking down the 2000 CU law, and 3) to organize in the other 49 states so that the creeping homosexual menace doesn't have success anywhere else. The conservative American Center for Law and Justice is already dashing to and fro in Vermont, putting together a crack team of legal experts to punch holes in the CU law.

Public opinion polls show that the rightwing organizers might be in for a bumpy ride. While most Vermonters don't approve of their legislators' CU invention, most Vermonters also don't rank the issue high enough to determine a vote for or against an incumbent. As well, the Vermont process of constitutional amendment is relatively lengthy and cumbersome, confounding anyone's kneejerk and fire-breathing threats to amend it willy-nilly. So, the rightwing anti-queer movement in Vermont will need to inflame and incite the populace—and sustain that inflammation—around an issue whose emotional wallop will dissipate rather quickly. The fact is that the more same-sex couples in Vermont get CU'ed, the less spectacular CU-ness will become, and the less flammable the issue. For the foreseeable future, the only people who are going to be focused on the CU law will be the rabidly anti-gay organizers and the same-sex couples who will mostly peacefully and mostly privately seek to be civilly united. Cuz in Vermont, honey, they do what they want.

Sue Hyde is the New England field organizer for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. She and her lover of fifteen years will not be going to Vermont to get hitched or CU'ed.

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The Sexual Rights Campaign:

A Powerful Model from the Women's Health Project of South Africa

By Shelley Mains

Mbangi Dzivhani and Sanjani Jane Varkey of the Women's Health Project (WHP) in South Africa visited Boston in March to share their remarkable programs with local health activists and other supporters. The WHP is an independently funded non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1991 to develop integrated, quality health services in South Africa. The following interview integrates two separate discussions held with Mbangi and Sanjani during their visit.

Shelley Mains: *Could you start by introducing us to the WHP and your roles in the organization?*

Sanjani Jane Varkey: I originally come from India and I've been with WHP for over four years. My particular role at WHP is in the area of research. My passion is about making abortion services available to women who want these services, so that they feel respected and they feel that their rights have been accepted in the health system. I'm also involved in training health care providers, senior managers, and middle-level managers [in health care organizations].

Mbangi, I understand you're a nurse and that you've been working at the WHP for about a year as a trainer in various projects including the Sexual Rights Campaign.

Mbangi Dzivhani: At WHP I'm still very new—I'm the baby. But I've learned so much since I started so I can represent WHP as I'm doing right now. I've always had a passion about women's health.

What do you see as being the major health issues facing women in South Africa?

Sanjani: In any women's health issue there is an unequal relationship between men and women that contributes to that particular illness. For example, look at the issue around condom use. There's an entire promotion of "let's get safer sex through condom use." But this doesn't recognize the fact that women do not have the negotiation skills or the power to negotiate the safer sex. If they do, it is at a brutal outcome to themselves. To me, we need to recognize that in everything we do; [gender] has to be looked at and addressed. That's most critical.

How does the WHP get people at all levels, from the front lines of health care up through the government, to look at gender issues?

Sanjani: Most of our projects have a multi-pronged approach, including a research component and a capacity-building component. So, for example, if we do a research project around the current situation in reproductive health care in a particular province, we ask specific questions about the nature of gender issues that normally would not feature in any research protocol. And then we also run training programs which have an element of gender for senior managers as well as health workers. One of our courses has become an international model called the Leadership Course in Gender and Reproductive Health. This is a collaborative effort between Harvard, the World Health Organization (WHO), and us. It started off primarily for sub-Saharan Africa and South African senior health managers, but now it has moved to take seed in probably seven other countries representing both the North and South ["developed" and "developing" countries]. [See article on the South African Women's Health Project in *Sojourner*, March 2000.]

The Sexual Rights Campaign

What is the history of the Sexual Rights Campaign in South Africa? Here in the United States, it is such a challenge to even talk about sexual health. People say, "Can't you just talk about health? Do you have to say the word sex?" In South Africa, you are taking it one step forward and talking about sexual rights.

Mbangi: The history goes back to the issues of violence against women, gender inequalities, and power relations. For many women, especially young girls, their first sexual encounter is coerced. Most of the women go through abusive relationships. If you are in a marriage, you need to be submissive. The husband needs to be able to have sex with you at any time—not you initiating sex. Women will be beaten for refusing to have sex with their husbands.

We linked all that into our Constitution, and we also linked that to the Beijing discourse, where the government and the NGOs committed themselves to implementing the international agreements, specifically reproductive health and reproductive rights.

So, we took it from there and said, okay, we want to promote gender equality. What are the root causes of inequality? We identified that women cannot talk about sex, especially Black women. The culture doesn't allow you to do that—it's taboo. A woman will be economically dependent on a husband or boyfriend. [Women] didn't know that we had rights.

[In our courses] we identified problems of power relations. We learned that rape is considered a game to "fix" a particular young girl or group of girls who think they are smart. [Young men] will rape them and nothing will be said about it. We let [these young men] come to the workshops. They talked about their experiences, and we asked them, "How would you feel if your sister was raped or gang raped?" These boys said, "I would kill him! I would shoot him!" At the end of the workshop they felt so sad and blamed themselves. [They started to think] of rape as a thing of power. During the workshop they would say "Those women are provoking us, we are enticed and we will go for them." But in the end, they acknowledged that rape has nothing to do with what a woman wears—it's power and violence. They regretted that, and committed themselves to change and to respecting their girlfriends.

Do you do follow-up with these young men?

Mbangi: We do. We found that there has been a reduction in rape in the areas where we've conducted trainings. Boys and young men mention that they are now able to respect the rights and choices of their girlfriends. If she says no to sex, they respect that decision. They are now having healthier relationships than they had before. They are now able to use the condom with respect. There's a reduction in rape and STDs [sexually transmitted diseases].

Mbangi Dzivhani and Sanjani Jane Varkey

Wow—that's amazing. Are there other aspects to the Sexual Rights Campaign besides the community-based trainings?

Mbangi: Yes. We train the trainers, which takes us beyond the community level. There are those organizations of the government and other NGOs whose facilitators or trainers are not equipped with the sexual rights information and facilitation skills. So we offer training and follow-up for these trainers. At the community level, we also train women in peer education workshops. We empower women with information about their bodies, STDs, and contraception.

We do those kinds of trainings here, where we talk about violence against women, and we talk to youth. But I think there's a level at which kids don't necessarily buy it. One of the big differences between the United States and South Africa is that you have women's rights encoded at the level of your Constitution and we don't. How much of a difference does that make?

Mbangi: The things that are now stipulated in the Constitution have a major influence. [The post-apartheid South African Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world, explicitly outlawing discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation, as well as race and ethnic origin.] When you talk about things during training it brings back people's memories that, "Oh, by the way, we need to respect other people's rights." And, "I'm exercising power here, and I'm responsible and accountable for my actions." This has an impact and influence.

Do you think young people have respect for your Constitution?

Mbangi: Yes, they do, and some acknowledge that their parents, their mothers, had been abused for such a long time previously and their voices were not heard. The Constitution is now there to address those issues. They really appreciate its presence.

Are your workshops more successful with young teens because ideas are not as entrenched as those of the adults you work with? Or do you have more success with adults?

Mbangi: It is more successful with adults because the norm has been that adults cannot talk openly about sex with their children. So we equip the parents to create a friendly environment with their children, to talk more openly about sex and their children's sexuality, to talk more about the use of contraceptives and the use of condoms. Not to prescribe, not to say, "Don't do this." As adults, we are fond of saying things like, "Don't come home late, don't mix with boys, don't do this and don't do that." Then they do exactly what you say they mustn't do!

That's universal. . . .

Mbangi: Yes. But, there is an impact when a parent is willing to change and says, "From now on, I'm going to talk to my daughter about options A, B, and C—Abstinence, Be faithful to your partner, or else use the Condom. You inform your daughter or your son about the advantages and disadvantages of getting involved in sexual activity at an early age. But if it happens that he or she is sexually active, then they

Continued on next page

SEXUAL RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

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- To enjoy pleasurable and safer sex

Continued from previous page

must use a condom, and practice forms of safer sex. They can have other forms of sex without penetration—cuddling, hugging, stroking, all of that.

You talk about all of that with the parents?

Mbangi: Yes, all of it. And we find that there's a very positive impact from parents who say, "I am now able to talk to my children." On the other side, the youths say, "I hear about these things from my friends, or from my aunt or whomever, but not from my mom. She's not friendly when it comes to that. She shies away when I'm watching TV with her and people are kissing or are naked—she will just jump off the sofa and go away." So we mainly target the parents and that's working.

Lesbian and Gay Sexual Rights

Here, too, parents don't necessarily want to avoid talking to kids about sex, they just don't know how. So I really like how you're giving parents the tools they need. Let me ask you about the component of the sexual rights campaign that deals with gay and lesbian issues. How is that going?

Mbangi: We have workshops on sexual orientation that are part of the sexual rights training. Again, [gay/lesbian] rights are protected by the Constitution. Gays and lesbians have their rights, but we need to respect their choices. In the training itself, we tend to demystify beliefs like, "Oh, who do they think they are?," "This is filthy," and "This is anti-Christ." During the workshops, we start off with the Constitution, and deal with rights and choices, trying to get people to understand that gays and lesbians are part of the community. Therefore, we must not discriminate against them. We really emphasize community acceptance.

How have you dealt with religious institutions?

Mbangi: We started with the Catholics—and we had a tough time. The first workshop that we had was with Catholic women. They approached us secretly and said that they were doing this at their own risk, but they felt that they needed to speak up and break the silence. We offered the first workshop in one woman's house because we didn't want to publicize it by going to a community hall or a school. There were about fifteen women. We were undercover for the whole week! I used to park my car a few blocks away from the house.

Wow. It was like being in the political underground all over again.

Mbangi: Exactly! All over again! After the workshop they created a petition and gave it to the bishop. It went from the bishop to the church leadership. It was a shock. It was even in newspapers.

Even talking about contraceptives and homosexuality, all of that?

Mbangi: A woman is not allowed [to make decisions] in the Catholic Church, especially in the Black townships. She can't decide on the use of contraceptives, she can't question the authority of the husband, she is to be submissive, according to the Bible. As time went on, the church leadership was under pressure. [The church members] managed to have an AIDS awareness day. They invited the church leadership, the priests up to the bishop, and distributed condoms openly.

We also targeted the Methodists. They are so flexible, very positive. We never experienced any objections from them. The thing that surprised me was that most of their pastors were promoting gender equality, saying that we need to have equal or greater numbers of women in the church leadership. They were encouraging women not only to vote for men, but to vote for other women.

That's fascinating. It's hard to imagine that that's not influenced by the fact that you have so many more women in government than we do here. Women in leadership are more accepted in South Africa.

Mbangi: In the WHP leadership course, as well, we encourage women to speak up, to be seen and heard! We encourage them that they can do it, and fight for their decision-making power, that they need to be involved in policy making processes. When they go back to their homes, sometimes they will write to us that they have been elected to this or that position.

You are doing extraordinary work. It is very inspiring to hear about. I'm curious about your impressions of the ways women's health and sexuality are dealt with in the United States compared to South Africa.

Mbangi: What I've realized is that the people in the United States are not yet free to talk about sexual rights. I discussed this with one of the people I met at a United Nations meeting in New York. She basically said that you [people in the United States] don't have the Constitution that binds people to implement or to talk about reproductive health and rights. And she said to me that you need to create an environment where your voice will be heard—but it will be questioned: "Who is this? Why is she talking about sexual rights?" People here are not yet free to talk about sex as we do in South Africa. To me, that's amazing because I thought that you people were 100 percent liberated! (laughter)

No, no. We have a lot of explicit media, but we're hardly liberated!

Mbangi: In terms of gender equality, in the United States there are fewer women in government leadership as compared to us in South Africa because we are preaching equality in the workplace, in the family, and in the society. We feel that women are still oppressed in the United States.

Shelley Mains is a reproductive health educator living in Boston.

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For more information call: 617-354-9888 or see our website at www.wccp-cancer-project.org

"F*ck'erware" Party in Provincetown

Not-so-sedate AIDS education for women

By Candace Perry

When it comes to fighting HIV and AIDS, it seems like every community has its own pockets of ignorance and misunderstanding to overcome. Out here at the tip of Cape Cod in Provincetown, Massachusetts—a town well-known for its lesbian/gay year-round and vacation communities—there's been an enlightened awareness of the need for AIDS education for men. For about five years, a Department of Health-funded program, the Provincetown Gay Men's AIDS Prevention Project (PGMAPP), has been coming up with creative ways to pass out condoms and educate the thousands of gay male visitors who frolic here in the summer. For year-rounders, the PGMAPP sponsors a Men's Negative Group, a place where men can talk with others about the difficulties of remaining negative in the town with the highest rate of AIDS cases in the commonwealth.

But what about women? Until recently, the prevailing sentiment was that HIV/AIDS is not a problem for women. Local women who were being tested were almost all negative, and our AIDS Service Organization, the Provincetown AIDS Support Group (PASG), had only a small handful of HIV-positive women clients. Another local health service organization, Helping Our Women (HOW), was geared especially to women suffering from chronic and life-threatening illnesses and found that AIDS was not high on their list of concerns. But we were all hearing that HIV/AIDS was on the rise among women. Should we sit by and wait for the incidence among Provincetown women to rise before we started thinking about prevention efforts geared to women?

And which women? Lesbians? Bisexual women? Heterosexual women? All women? An earlier effort to get out prevention information on breast cancer along with HIV/AIDS had been met with a cold shoulder from the hospitality and tourist-oriented sector of our community. Preventing disease isn't a vacation upper, and again, the dominant thinking around HIV/AIDS was that this just wasn't a problem for women, especially not for lesbians.

Then some of us read in *Sojourner* (June 1998) about a startling new study. Trish Case, Sc.D., of the Harvard Medical School, and Beck Young, Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University, had discovered that women who have sex with women and inject drugs are two to five times more likely to be HIV-positive than heterosexual women who also inject drugs. We watched their video explaining their findings, which we used as a jumping off point to begin focusing our prevention efforts. The Women's Sexual Health Taskforce was created, made up of representatives from Independence House (our service organization for battered women and sexual assault survivors), Helping Our Women, the Provincetown AIDS Support Group, the Provincetown Gay Men's AIDS Prevention Project, and the community.

By early last summer we were putting together a brochure, aimed at women, that would alert them to their risk of HIV, HPV (human papilloma virus), and Hepatitis C. The brochure was short, colorful, and direct. "Viruses Don't Have a Cure, Get the Facts, Gurl" used plain language to let women know that AIDS was the fourth leading cause of death among women ages 24 to 44, and that HPV, with which 40 million Americans are infected, is now recognized as the major cause of cervical cancer. We urged safe sex practices, the use of clean needles, HIV testing, and annual pap smears, plus gave a list of resources. While we were producing the brochure we decided we also needed to hold an event that would appeal to women who were in town for the annual Women's Week. Our "F*ck'erware" Party was born and took place on a Wednesday afternoon in October at a Provincetown women's bar, Chasers. The "F*ck'erware" Party featured lots of laughs and unapologetic recognition that women are in fact sexual beings. Over a hundred women crowded into Chasers to learn about safer sex practices. Modeled on the more sedate "Tupperware" parties, we demonstrated how a wide variety of donated items could both spice up women's sex lives and be used to make sex safer. Women in the audience came forward, said how they'd used a particular item in a sexual way, and then added how they would be sure the sexual way was also safe. For instance, one woman jumped up to claim a bottle of aromatic massage oil, which she said she'd use to massage her partner in a loving way. Stumped by how to be sure this was a safer sex act, she got help from one of our "hostesses" who noted that if she and her partner were using any latex barriers, including dams, gloves, finger cots, lollies (a larger and thinner dam), or condoms, they had to be sure to wash off the massage oil first because the oil could break down the latex. A little education and a lot of fun!

The feedback we got from the event was quite positive, and the Women's Sexual Health Taskforce is now planning a similar event targeted towards mothers in our community. We're also revising the brochure for use in schools and the community at large, since the original is sexually specific and not intended for younger audiences.

Since our efforts began, the numbers of women going in for HIV/AIDS testing has increased. We continue, however, to struggle with how to get a message out to a wide range of women, how to include some groups without offending others, and how to overcome the spoken and unspoken opinions that women shouldn't be so open about sex. We are driven by the facts—that AIDS does not have a cure, and that since we began our work, AIDS has moved from fourth to third place among leading causes of death among women ages 24 to 44. These sobering statistics are more than enough to keep us working to find creative and successful ways to bring the prevention message to women in our community.

Candace Perry, LICSW, has been the clinical director of the Provincetown AIDS Support Group for two years and was one of the conveners of the Women's Sexual Health Taskforce.

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Say the Word: California Students Learn about Hate and Justice

By Kate Raphael

Just an hour south of San Francisco, in the town of Morgan Hill, students have had to contend with vicious anti-gay harassment and violence. In April 1998, five young women and one young man from Live Oak High School filed suit in U.S. District Court against the school, its former principal, the district superintendent, and the school board for refusing to protect them.

Is it cool to be a lesbian or gay kid these days?

Some young people say it is. After all, there's "Will & Grace," and Wilson Cruz's gay nanny on "Party of Five," and "Ellen" is at least a not-too-distant memory. There are also over 800 Gay/Straight Alliances (GSAs) in schools around the country. Corey Johnson, a high school football captain in Massachusetts, came out recently with the support of his teammates and with a huge media fanfare. Terri Massin, a longtime activist with the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Parents Association, says her son and daughter report that in their schools, it is at least "*pretty* cool to be bisexual, because it is very important not to be rigid."

But does all this make it safer to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered in high schools or middle schools? Not in Morgan Hill, California, about an hour's drive south of San Francisco.

Vicious Harassment at Live Oak High School

In April 1998, five current and former students at Live Oak High School filed suit in U.S. District Court against the school, its former principal, the district superintendent, and the school board for refusing to protect them from vicious anti-gay harassment and violence. The suit was later joined by one other plaintiff. The five young women and one young man are being represented by the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), private attorneys Leslie Levy and Diane Ritchie, and attorneys from the firm of Keker & Van Nest.

Alana Flores, the only fully-named plaintiff (the others have chosen to be identified only by initials—or, for this article, by first names), recalls "daily and fierce unrelenting harassment" at the huge rural/suburban school.

Shortly after enrolling in the high school as a sophomore, Flores found notes in her locker reading, "Die, die, dyke bitch . . . We'll kill you," and pictures of women bound and gagged. She went to a female assistant principal who asked her, "Is it true you're a lesbian?" and told her not to "bring me this trash anymore." When students chanted "faggot, faggot, faggot" at a male student during a dance recital, Flores says the dance teacher hugged the dancers afterwards, but did nothing during the yelling.

In one incident, a seventh grader at Murphy Middle School in the same district was hospitalized after being beaten by a group of boys shouting "faggot" and other anti-gay epithets. According to NCLR, "The beating took place in full view of the school bus driver, who took no action." The same student encountered so much torture in a drafting class at Live Oak that he was forced to drop the class. Another student threatened him, saying, "I want to beat you up after class but I need a baseball bat to hit you because I don't want to get AIDS."

Jeanette, another of the plaintiffs, describes Live Oak as a place already seething with racism and sexual harassment. But homophobia alone, she contends, was tolerated, condoned, and sometimes even initiated by faculty—"those we were supposed to look up to and respect."

Jeanette became a target of anti-gay aggression after going to a meeting of the school's fledgling Gay/Straight Alliance. When she arrived for the meeting, she was surprised that there were so few students there. "They told me that after the first meeting, people had waited for them to come out and thrown stuff at them and yelled stuff at them," she recalls. "The meeting let out right into the lunch room. Immediately, people started coming at me and saying things about my sexual preference." The group stopped publicizing its meetings and changed locations, but the harassment and even physical confrontations became so severe that the club had to stop meeting.

When two of Jeanette's friends were sexually harassed, the perpetrator shifted the focus to blame Jeanette for what had happened. He claimed it was Jeanette he had really harassed and that she had welcomed his advances because she was a lesbian and wanted to try heterosexuality for a change. Jeanette was called to the vice principal's office and interrogated about her sexual orientation. "She asked me if I was a virgin, if I wasn't really a lesbian. She kept trying to get me to say it was my fault." The vice principal demanded to know what the initials "A.C.", which Jeanette wore on her backpack, meant. When Jeanette told her it stood for her nickname, "Always Confused," "she insisted there was some kind of sexual connotation to that."

The Students' Suit Goes Forward

The multimillion dollar suit has survived several motions to dismiss, and more recently, a motion for summary judgment. In that motion, attorneys for the school district asked the district court to find that at the time of the harassment, the schools had no clear duty under the U.S. Constitution to protect students against sexual orientation harassment. The District Court denied summary judgment on that issue and set the case for trial in April 2000. However, the defendants appealed that ruling to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, resulting in an automatic stay of the proceedings. Attorney Levy estimates that the stay could cause a delay of a year or more before the case goes to trial.

There have been several attempts to reach a settlement, but, says Levy, "The district has put nothing real on the table." In one negotiation session, she recalls, "Their insurance company representative said, 'So they got called a bunch of names about being queer. What's the harm?'"

The harm, Levy and others respond, is not just hurt feelings, though that would be bad enough. "Sexual orientation harassment represents a life-and-death threat to lesbian and gay students," Levy states. She refers to the reported suicide rates of lesbian, gay, and questioning teens that are by some accounts more than three times that of non-sexual-minority youth.

The greatest danger to queer youth, however, may not be themselves. In September 1999, the national Gay/Lesbian/Straight Education Network (GLSEN) released a study of 500 gay students which found that nearly half had experienced sexual harassment, 27.6 percent physical harassment, and 13.7 percent physical assault. Nearly all the participants surveyed—90 percent—had heard anti-gay language or insults in their schools.

There is also a risk to the students' education. Jeanette, who is now twenty years old and is not a lesbian, dropped out of Live Oak after two years because she could not take the harassment any more. She has recently gone back to another school in the district to finish her education while continuing to work. A Massachusetts survey found GLBT youth were seven times as likely as heterosexuals to skip school because of fears for their safety.

If anything, recent studies have shown that the increasing visibility of lesbians and gays, including visibility in schools, is increasing the antagonism directed toward them. In a 1995 survey of over 500 male community college students in the San Francisco Bay Area, over half admitted to having engaged in anti-gay harassment, and 18 percent admitted to physically attacking people they perceived to be gay. In 1998, 48 percent of the 3,000 "top students" polled by *Who's Who Among American High School Students* said they are prejudiced against lesbians and gay men, up 19 percent from 1997. Thirty percent of the students in GLSEN's national survey had heard homophobic comments from faculty members.

Combating Homophobia for the Future

Even school districts that have excellent policies and procedures for combating homophobia may not be implementing them. Sarah Marxer, program director of the Lavender Youth Recreation & Information Center (LYRIC) in San Francisco, says that their leadership program did a survey of queer and heterosexual youth in the area several years ago. "What they found was actually no different than what's found in any other school district," she says. They concluded that the policies of the San Francisco Unified School District, which mandate both explicit protection for lesbian/gay students and a "rainbow" curriculum designed to educate students on sexual orientation and homophobia, are not being utilized effectively.

In particular, Marxer says, racism affects the homophobia encountered in districts like San Francisco where most of the students are people of color and the majority of teachers are white. "The experience of young people of color is very different than that of white students. They are more likely to be disciplined themselves for reporting homophobia."

LYRIC has worked with the school district and other organizations such as the Lesbian & Gay Parents Association, Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE), and the GSA Network to set up a monitoring committee to devise better procedures for handling complaints and make sure that the curriculum goals are met.

A group of middle school students at San Francisco Community School, a small public alternative school, discovered that awareness is sometimes taken for granted even at a progressive school like theirs. Eighth grader Alanna Berman and three classmates began a project looking at homophobia in their school in the fall of 1999, as part of a program called "Youth Take a Stand." Berman, together with seventh graders Aurora Simkovich and Jessica Consejo, decided to focus on lesbian/gay issues mainly, she says, because it was different from what everyone else was doing. Simkovich says that through the project, and from information provided by GLSEN, "I learned how horrible the situation is for lesbian and gay kids in school. It's almost as serious as racial or religious discrimination."

"Our teacher, Beth, told us that there's supposed to be a gay sensitive adult in each school," Berman recalls. "So we asked who that was [at our school], and no one knew. Then we asked Tanya, our head teacher this year, and she said, 'Oh, I guess there isn't one.' You'd think in a liberal school like this, something like that wouldn't be overlooked." The students also said they had never had a sex education unit which included sexual orientation issues. They got 51 percent of the middle school students and parents to sign a petition which resulted in a series of educational programs on sexuality.

Still, Berman speculates that it is easier to be a gay or lesbian kid in San Francisco than in another area, "like the South." Carolyn Laub, founder and

© Marilyn Humphries

May 6, 2000. Boston, MA. Members of various GLBT youth groups who participated in the "Celebrating Greater Boston's LGBT Youth" exhibit at Northeastern Univ. Curry Center.

Millennium Rainbow:

Honoring Boston's LGBT Youth

It's hard to be a gay teenager, because unless you are very lucky, you are forced to live a divided life. Your life separates itself into contexts in which it is comfortable for you to be gay and contexts where it is not. Integrating all aspects of my life into a whole is difficult enough without having to integrate more than one life.
—Elizabeth, 1995

Elizabeth's words capture the dilemmas and challenges faced by thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered youth each day as they negotiate the world. The struggle, simply put, is to find safe spaces where they can be whole people. Over the last decade, LGBT youth in Massachusetts, with the support of adult allies, have been creating those spaces at a phenomenal pace. The success of this movement is made clear in a series of three maps of Massachusetts created for the Millennium Rainbow, an exhibit of photographs and artifacts concerning the lives of LGBT youth sponsored by The History Project. The 1990 map shows three pushpins indicating safe spaces in the state specifically for LGBT youth; the 1995 map shows 21; and remarkably the 2000 map shows literally hundreds (defying easy counting) of gay/straight alliances (GSAs) and alliances for gay and lesbian youth (AGLYs). Elizabeth's portrait and words are part of Visible and Proud (1995), a collection of nineteen photographs that form the centerpiece of the Millennium Rainbow exhibit.

Millennium Rainbow additionally features collages by Project 10 East, and the Boston Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY); a scrapbook from Project 10 East; artifacts from Boston Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services (GLASS); twelve photographs by Marilyn Humphries documenting the Gay Straight Youth Pride March and youth organizing over the past five years; four photographs by Erica Sagrans of Project 10 East; a 33-minute video documentary on BAGLY, GLASS, and Project 10 East; and archival materials on the development of the youth movement in Boston dating back to 1969. This very rich exhibit captures the diversity, joy, pain, and struggle of the LGBT youth movement.

In one remarkable photo, Jessica holds her head high and stares off into the distance, refusing to be diminished by taunts and slurs. She says, "The whole concept of 'out'—I don't know how to relate to it, because as a transgendered person, I've always been "out" as a freak. . . . Out is not a concept I can relate to, because things just weren't that simple. I was harassed. I was chased through snow, victimized. I was yelled at all the time, whenever I walked down the halls, because of the way I looked. So, yeah, I guess I was out."

While the Visible and Proud photos express the struggles LGBT youth confront as they navigate the minefields of family and school, the collages produced by youth at Project 10 East and BAGLY capture the celebratory aspect of their movement and their lives. Teens dressed in their prom finery, out at the Youth Pride Marches, at award ceremonies, and in tender moments of joy evoke a sense of the true meaning of "safe space." Among friends and adult allies, these youth are able to explore their sexuality, discover who they are and who they want to be, and take action to create a safer world for those who are coming up behind them.

Millennium Rainbow: Celebrating Greater Boston's LGBT Youth, an exhibit at Northeastern University's Curry Center May 6-May 31, 2000. Every day from 10 am to 8 pm. For further information contact the curator, Jay Laird, at Project 10/Cambridge (617) 349-6486 or project10e@aol.com.

* * *

The History Project focuses on conducting research on lesbians and gay men in Massachusetts, preserving the documentary record of that community's social and historical contributions, and providing a forum for educating the general public.

—*Karen Kahn*

Karen Kahn doesn't even remember hearing the words "lesbian" and "gay" in high school.

Say the Word

Continued from previous page

director of the Bay Area Gay/Straight Alliance Network, calls this notion a myth. "It's been a long battle to get GSAs in urban, progressive areas," she says. "In Oakland there are six public high schools, and only one has a GSA. Even though the administration is progressive, and there is a task force [on homophobia], that does not always filter down to the teachers or the students. Often there is not support, and there's a climate of fear, so students don't want to form a club."

Being able to form clubs is important, says Laub, who at 25 has worked with the GSA Network for nearly two years, because "it enables students to feel supported and safe to come out." Three years ago, for example, "One student at Eureka High School, five hours north of San Francisco, came out, the first ever at that school. Since then, fifteen students have come out."

Geoff Winder, a junior at Davis High School in the Sacramento area, started a GSA, but he is still the only out high school student in his town. There are about four other students who come to GSA meetings regularly, he says, including one who identifies as bisexual, one who is the daughter of lesbians, and one who "is just really political; he is for any type of human rights."

Winder finds it isolating to be in a small community away from the Bay Area where the GSA Network, of which he is a board member, is based. He enjoys speaking in middle schools with a college-run lesbian/gay speaker's bureau, but he is tired of being a poster child.

Jeanette became a target of anti-gay aggression after going to a meeting of the school's fledgling Gay/Straight Alliance. When she arrived for the meeting, she was surprised that there were so few students. "They told me that after the first meeting, people had waited for them to come out and thrown stuff at them and yelled stuff at them."

"Sometimes I feel like people think whatever I do, it's the embodiment of being gay," he says a little mournfully. Winder, who is also concerned about ending sweatshops and child labor, hopes to work at some kind of queer activism after college. But he definitely does not intend to remain in Davis or devote his college years to being a gay icon. "When I'm talking to colleges, I ask if they have a lesbian/gay resource center and how big it is. If it's a broom closet, I'm like, forget it."

California students have a new tool in the fight to make their schools safer. Assembly Bill 537, introduced by lesbian legislator Sheila Kuehl, was passed in September 1999 after a stronger law was defeated by one vote in June. The law states that all the kinds of discrimination used to categorize hate crimes, which include sexual orientation and gender identity, are also prohibited in state schools. Five months after taking effect, the law is only now being implemented: a 537 Task Force established by the Department of Education had its first meeting at the end of April. But students, 700 of whom went to Sacramento for a Youth Lobby Day to help pass the bill, are already using it to insist that their complaints be taken seriously.

Marxer related the story of a middle school student in San Mateo County who was pushed out of a classroom by a fellow student saying, "No lesbians allowed" while the substitute teacher did nothing. "She went right to the principal and said, 'There's a new law called 537 and you have to fix this.'"

Levy feels her clients' lawsuit, which involves the largest group of plaintiffs to file such a suit in this country, will also force administrators to take anti-gay harassment and violence seriously. "When school districts sit up and take notice is when they're forced to take it seriously, because of economics, because of student unrest or because someone in power forces them to." Although a gay teacher at the school was told that the district "had to proceed very prudently while it was in litigation," they have already made some changes, Levy says, including explicitly integrating sexual orientation harassment into their sexual harassment policy.

At Live Oak and other schools, she says, faculty want to avoid talking about sexual orientation directly. "We ask them what they have done when they heard homophobic comments, and they say, 'I told them that they have to respect each other and you shouldn't call each other names,'" she says, "but you have to deal directly with why it is they think it's okay to call a particular group these names." Massin concurs. When she visited her daughter Mariah's kindergarten class, the teacher, a straight Latina, told her, "You have to say 'lesbian' or they won't get it. You have to say the word."

Kate Raphael is a radical lesbian activist, freelance journalist, and office slave in San Francisco.

TransWorld II Builds Community for Transgendered People of Color

By Pauline Park

If the first conference specifically by and for transgendered people of color (TGPOC) can be called an historic moment in the life of this community, the second conference is surely evidence of further growth and development.

The Audre Lorde Project (ALP), a center for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, and transgendered people of color communities, hosted TransWorld I at its home in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, in October 1998. ALP also served as the primary sponsor for TransWorld II: Strengthening Community, which was held at Public School 41 in Manhattan's Greenwich Village on April 15 of this year. Over 150 people of all colors, sexual orientations, and gender identities flocked to TransWorld II for workshops addressing topics ranging from health and hormones to relationships, and from making money to legal and political issues.

While many transgendered conferences are dominated by non-transgendered white male service providers such as physicians and psychologists, TransWorld II workshops were facilitated largely by people of color, both transgender-identified and non-transgendered lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. For example, the panel on the difficulties of making money was moderated by a transgendered Vietnamese woman, Trieu Ly (True), and featured people speaking from personal experience, such as Kiara St. James and Kristianna ThoMas'leah, two African American women of transgender experience who (along with True) were also members of the conference organizing committee, and an African American transman, Kori Raishon Galloway. The panel on "healthy loving" was moderated by another transgendered African American woman, Arlene Hoffman, and included a black transman, Andre Stevens, as well as LGB service providers of color. Similarly, the health and hormones panel was moderated by Afro-Caribbean transman Imani Henry (another member of the conference planning committee) and included African American transwoman Moshay Moses.

The legal and political issues panel, which I moderated, included non-transgendered people of color such as Pradeep Singla, an Indian-born attorney at the Lesbian & Gay Immigration Rights Task Force, who discussed the process of applying for political asylum for LGBT people. Edgar Rodriguez, executive director of the Gay Officers Action League (GOAL), discussed his advocacy work within the New York Police Department on behalf of LGBT people and people of color as an openly gay Latino sergeant. Theresa Jefferson, the police/community relations coordinator at the New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, discussed strategies that TGPOCs can use to avoid arrest and stay safe while dealing with the NYPD, something that may literally be a matter of life and death for transgendered people and people of color. Concern over policing within communities of color has reached unprecedented levels in the wake of the sadistic torture of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima and the deaths of Amadou Diallo (a Guinean immigrant gunned down by police in the Bronx in a hail of 41 bullets) and Patrick Dorismond (a Haitian man shot to death by undercover police attempting to sell him illicit narcotics). I concluded the workshop with a discussion of my work with the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA, the first statewide transgender political organization in New York), including the group's campaign to introduce legislation into the New York City Council that would outlaw discrimination based on gender identity or expression.

In order to give conference attendees the widest range of choice, every workshop was run twice, in a morning session and then again in the afternoon. The workshop sessions were bookended by an opening plenary session and a community speak-out. The opening plenary featured well-known transgender activists Sylvia Rivera and Gary Bowen, the latter best known as the founder of American Boyz (an organization for female-to-male transgendered people and their significant others, friends, families, and allies) and the founder of the annual Amboyz conference, True Spirit; and Des'ree McGraw, a peer educator and mentor with the New York Peer AIDS Education Coalition (NYPAEC), who spoke about her work as a transgender youth advocate. Just as the prelude to the opening plenary was a moving poem by Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhran, a multiracial, award-winning poet of Sephardic heritage, performances followed the community speak-out—including a powerful poem on the transgender experience by a young African American woman named Raas NaShantee. Following the poem by Raas, I closed the conference with an invocation to the transgendered Korean shaman (the *paksu mudang*). I pointed to third sex/third gender figures from pre-modern cultures as potential sources of inspiration for transgendered people of color who would like to connect with non-Western traditions in developing contemporary non-white identities in a white-dominant transgender community.

> **The most original decision made by the TransWorld II organizing committee was to transform P.S. 41 into a repository of collective memory for transgendered people of color.**

Perhaps the most original decision made by the TransWorld II organizing committee was to transform P.S. 41 into a kind of repository of collective memory for transgendered and gender-variant people of color: the rooms in which conference workshops and plenary sessions were held were named for individuals who had been prominent members of the community in life and whom the organizing committee wished to remember in death. Hence, the auditorium on the main floor was designated the Marsha P. Johnson Room, in honor of the transgendered African American activist and Stonewall veteran who was found dead under mysterious circumstances following the 1982 New York City Pride parade. Another room was named for Fitzroy "Jamaica" Green, an African American whose alleged murderer was acquitted earlier this year after his lawyers mounted a homophobic and transgenderphobic defense. Other rooms were named in memory of Daniele Revlon, a member of the "house" community who died in 1999; Lady Catiria, a Latina performer at Escuelita and an AIDS activist; Luscious, an HIV/AIDS outreach worker found shot to death in 1997; and Todd, a young FTM peer outreach worker who did street outreach for NYPAEC and other agencies.

The TransWorld II conference organizing committee included Huy Le (ALP staff), Imani Henry (a consultant to the conference), Javid Syed and Trieu Ly (both of the Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS [APICHA]), Bali White (Black Pride NYC and Harlem United), Kiara St. James (Harlem United), Kristianna ThoMas'leah (ALP volunteer), Tommy Wang (ALP staff), and myself (NYAGRA). Co-sponsoring organizations included APICHA, Black Pride NYC, Harlem United, NYAGRA, the Center for Lesbian & Gay Studies (CLAGS) at the City University of New York, and the Gender Identity Project of the Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center.

Pauline Park co-founded the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (www.nyagra.org) and serves as the coordinator of the legislative work group on gender-based discrimination. She was also a member of the planning committees that organized both TransWorld I and II. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the above-mentioned organizations.

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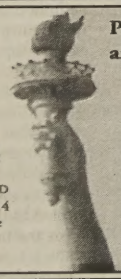

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Stepping Outside the "Noah's Ark format"

Reform Judaism Affirms Same-Sex Ceremonies

An interview with Rabbi Elaine Zecher

By Vicki Gabriner

Elaine Zecher is one of three rabbis at Temple Israel in Boston. A large urban reform synagogue, Temple Israel has for the last decade been in the forefront of creating a Judaism that reflects the Jewish community in its full diversity. We talked in her office about the resolution passed in March 2000 by the Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), recognizing that "the relationship of a Jewish, same gender couple is worthy of affirmation through appropriate Jewish ritual."

© Vicki Gabriner

Rabbi Elaine Zecher

Vicki Gabriner: ***What exactly did the Reform Rabbinate decide in March?***

Elaine Zecher: The resolution passed by the Reform Rabbinate supports those rabbis who want to officiate at same-sex marriage ceremonies, while recognizing and supporting that there are rabbis who don't want to. As my colleague, Rabbi Jonah Pesner, says, this resolution affirms that just as Judaism recognizes that God can be present in a relationship between a man and woman, Judaism recognizes that God is also present in a relationship between two women or two men, and that having a ceremony that recognizes, sanctifies, and celebrates their union is now supported nationally. Of course, we at Temple Israel had supported it for many years before any resolution was adopted.

And was that also true in a number of reform synagogues around the country?

For sure. The difference is that now this has become part of the doctrine of our national organization/community, and therefore takes on greater significance than when people were just doing it privately.

Does this means that the Reform Rabbinate came out in support of "gay and lesbian marriage"?

I'd really have to say yes and no. In order for the resolution to pass, it recognized that there were rabbis who did not feel comfortable with performing same-sex ceremonies, and showed support for that position. In effect, I don't think that the main message was for me as a rabbi. Rabbis have the autonomy to decide at which ceremonies we will or will not officiate. I think the message was for gay and lesbian Jews who have felt that on a national level there hasn't been the kind of acceptance and embrace that every individual deserves.

What role did lesbian and gay rabbinical students have in the discussion about officiating at same-sex ceremonies?

This year celebrates the tenth anniversary of the ordination of openly gay or lesbian men and women by the Reform rabbinical college, Hebrew Union College. With this acceptance, our lesbian and gay colleagues became a stronger voice in the rabbinate. They created a gay and lesbian rabbinic network within the CCAR, which was a strong impetus to move this kind of resolution forward. But they weren't alone in wanting to make this change. For many years, there had been workshops on the subject at CCAR conferences, but nothing was ever brought to the floor of the plenary. In 1996, the CCAR passed a resolution which supported "the right of gay and lesbian couples to share fully and equally in the rights of civil marriage," and voiced opposition to governmental efforts to ban gay and lesbian marriages. This didn't have anything to do with rabbis *per se*, but it did mean that the CCAR was willing to make a public statement that as a rabbinic organization, it supported the idea of domestic partnership.

> **If you're in an interfaith, interracial, or gay and lesbian relationship, you're not in what I call the "Noah's Ark" format, when you come two by two, male and female, same species.**

Describe the process of getting the resolution supporting officiating at same-sex ceremonies to the floor this year.

Many rabbis were already officiating at same-sex ceremonies in their synagogues. The question was how that would be reflected in what the national organization was saying. Two CCAR committees addressed the question of same-gender officiation—the *Responsa* Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee on Human Sexuality. The *Responsa* Committee, which looked at the question from the point of view of *halacha* [Jewish law], determined that sanctifying a same-sex relationship did not have a basis in *halacha* (although there were two minority opinions, one of which was from the former senior rabbi at Temple Israel). The Ad Hoc Committee on Human Sexuality, on the other hand, decided the polar opposite, that we should be embracing any Jewish couple who wants to create *kiddushin* to sanctify their marriage and their life together, and to create a Jewish home. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Human Sexuality was accepted in 1998, but no resolution was brought to the floor. In March 1999, the Women's Rabbinic Network passed a resolution urging the CCAR to bring the issue to the floor of the convention plenum. When that did not happen, my colleague Rabbi Bernard Mehlman, and some other colleagues, got together and sent out postcards to all the reform rabbis. On the postcards it asked, "Would you officiate at a same sex ceremony?" Of the approximately 1800 reform rabbis in the CCAR, over 500 responded affirmatively. This was a high response rate, and was critical to galvanizing the support necessary to move forward on this resolution.

Is there a basis in Jewish law for this decision?

That's an interesting question. Reform Jews look at Jewish law to inform, rather than to dictate, our decisions. Although the law is a valuable prism through which to explore how Judaism views homosexuality, there are many other avenues that we can search to determine what Judaism tells us. In some ways, I think it's actually dangerous to rely totally on the law. The Book of Leviticus, for example, says that a man should not lie with another man as he does with a woman. Okay, so one group of Jews chooses to observe that, whereas there are other commandments in the Torah that they don't observe. So, to say that the Torah says X, and therefore we must do Y, is not how progressive Jews look at Judaism. My Torah teaching is that ultimately, I think it's about justice, for which the Hebrew word is *tzedakah*. Although it's often translated as "charity," the deeper meaning of *tzedakah* is "to do the right thing," to recognize that God's image is in every individual, every soul and every person, to love your neighbor as yourself, to welcome those who live among you. From this perspective, it is clearly the right thing to do to accept and sanctify the relationships of lesbian and gay Jews who are committed to creating a Jewish home and life together.

What was the response from Reform rabbis once the resolution was put forth, and from other branches of Judaism?

There was a huge amount of conversation on the listserv over the Internet between Reform rabbis, ranging from amazingly supportive to comments that can only be characterized as homophobic. It brought out many emotional feelings among the rabbis, and that's why in the end, the resolution was a reflection of both those who were completely supportive of the idea of officiating at ceremonies and those who chose not to. I think this whole process will have a trickle-down effect on other branches of Judaism. The Reform movement is in some way on the cutting edge; the Conservative movement is influenced by, or uses, the experience of the Reform movement, like our outreach to interfaith couples, to inform some of their practices.

Have you gotten feedback from other branches of Judaism to that effect?

The only feedback we've gotten is that the Reform movement has done yet another thing that is going to be divisive and that is going to create two different kinds of Jews. That's the public reaction. Privately, I think that there are many conservative/traditional rabbis who are thrilled. They know that there is a place where their congregants may be able to go for ceremonies and rituals that they can't find in their own synagogues.

What do you think lies at the core of the kind of change we're discussing?

I think this whole issue has to do with personal relationships. What helped to change a whole set of attitudes at Temple Israel—although it had started earlier—was that in the early '80s, a rabbinic student who was interning for the summer came out to the clergy and discussed his experience of being a gay rabbi. He put a face on something that was viewed very differently at that time. And he helped to bring a community of gay people into Temple Israel that is at present a very strong part of our congregation, our lesbian and gay *chavurah* [community]. He helped the rabbis connect to some gay men he had known when they were studying for the rabbinate at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, which led to these men joining Temple Israel as the first openly gay couple.

You've performed same-sex ceremonies (weddings, baby namings and b'nai mitzvah ceremonies of children of gay and lesbian couples). Talk about that, and how the congregation has responded.

I co-officiated with Rabbi Ronne Friedman and Cantor Roy Einhorn at the first same-sex ceremony at Temple Israel, the marriage of two women.

Continued on page 26

Anti-Gay Parents' Group Attacks Sex Ed

By Rosemary Candelario

Controversy erupted in Massachusetts as an anti-gay group called the Parents' Rights Coalition (PRC) rallied at the State House May 18, calling for the elimination of state funding for "homosexual programs in the public schools," the firing of Department of Education (DOE) Commissioner David Driscoll, and the disbanding of the Governor's Commission for Gay and Lesbian Youth.

The PRC's action came in response to a March 25 Boston-area conference entitled "Teach Out," which was sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). Scott Whiteman, executive director of the Parents' Rights Coalition, secretly attended "Teach Out" and illegally recorded parts of the conference, including a workshop entitled "What They Didn't Tell You About Queer Sex and Sexuality in Health Class: Workshop for Youth Only." PRC then played excerpts of the tape, taken out of context, on WTKK-FM (96.9) and by printing excerpts in an article on the Massachusetts News website (massnews.com).

PRC is targeting the Department of Education because GLSEN receives state funding through the Department of Education (DOE) to run the state's Safe Schools program, which promotes awareness of lesbian and gay issues on high school campuses. According to Driscoll in a statement made May 16, "[T]he conference was not sponsored by, organized by, or funded by the [DOE]." However, the workshop was facilitated by two coordinators of the DOE's HIV/AIDS Program along with a consultant to the program. After the PRC's attack, the facilitators of the workshop were forbidden by Driscoll to have direct contact with students.

Two students who attended the workshop in question have made statements which were released by Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD). Student attendee Liana Buccieri wrote, "We who are GLBT youth need to go to weekend conferences unrelated to school to be able to get any information that pertains to our specific needs and issues because it is not available in schools. Students chose to attend this workshop because they felt that there would be valuable, educational information that they could get from it. And that's exactly what it was—educational." Another student attendee, Hannah Feldman, said, "I feel that ["Teach Out"] had a very positive impact on myself and the others who attended. I did not feel pressured to discuss anything. I chose to do so. The facilitators asked us what questions we had about sexuality in general and we had the opportunity to write these on notecards. It provided us with a sense of confidentiality."

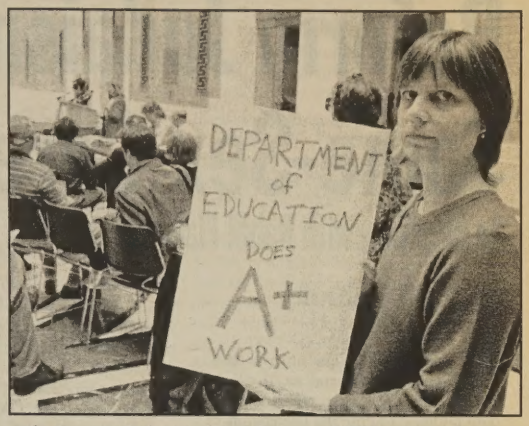
That confidentiality was broken when the PRC's Whiteman taped the workshop without the knowledge of the facilitators and participants, and aired the tape on the radio. According to the *Boston Globe*, the PRC has also distributed copies of the tape to legislators. The PRC had announced that they would sell tapes of the workshop, but were stopped from doing so by a restraining order obtained by GLAD.

Student attendee Feldman wrote, "By recording these sessions, the very people who claim to be concerned about the needs of young people were indifferent as to how these youth would feel when some of their most private concerns were illegally taped. Those who spoke [in the workshop] now have to worry. If this is made public, students who are recognized may be harassed or harmed."

Additional criticism of the DOE staffers who conducted the workshop has come from several sources. A May 18 editorial on the Massachusetts News website claims, "[C]hildren were molested by employees of the Department of Education" at the conference, while another talks about "children who were damaged at the conference." That same editorial refers to the HIV educators as "'three dirty old people' who obviously enjoy talking dirty to children." A *Boston Herald* editorial, also dated May 18, states, "It is simply wrong to encourage high school students to engage in sexual activity, gay or straight." The editorial concludes that the staffers "should have been fired forthwith." DOE Commissioner Driscoll, who admitted in a statement that he had only heard excerpts from the tape, nonetheless said, "The workshops were of prurient nature, and not educational, and what we heard suggests that the discussion contributed absolutely nothing to the students' understanding of how to avoid AIDS and HIV."

Even a representative of GLSEN did not defend the HIV educators. Kevin Jennings, executive director of GLSEN, told the *Herald*, "Like the Parents' Rights Coalition and the Department of Education, GLSEN is also troubled by some of the content that came up during this workshop."

Other sex educators and HIV education advocates have stepped forward to defend the workshop. Amy Rosenberg, a Senior Public Policy and Legal Specialist with the AIDS Action Committee, maintained that explicit discussion is necessary for effective education. Rosenberg said, "We can't talk about HIV prevention without discussing sex. In order to be effective, the discussion needs to be honest and explicit, and needs to be in language that kids use themselves." Rosenberg added that the practice of having students ask anonymous questions which are then answered by a teacher or facilitator, the format of the workshop in question, has been used successfully for years.



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The Parents' Rights Coalition denounced HIV and sex education programs at a press conference at the Massachusetts State House on May 18. A supporter of the programs stands front, right.

A 1999 survey commissioned by SIECUS (the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S.) and Advocates for Youth, conducted by Hickman-Brown Research, found overwhelming support among adults for sexuality education for adolescents, including information on pregnancy and STD prevention methods.

Student attendee Buccieri said, "As was evidenced by the outrageous reaction to the discussion we had in this workshop, people are not comfortable talking about gay adults having sex, never mind gay teens." Feldman added, "It is the silence that is endangering young people, not the dialogue."

Note: As *Sojourner* goes to press, the *Globe* reports that Commissioner Driscoll has fired one of the two workshop facilitators who worked for DOE; the other has resigned. Letters and faxes in response to the action can be sent to Commissioner Driscoll, Dept. of Ed, 350 Main St., Malden MA 02148. Fax: (781) 338-3392.

Rosemary Candelario is a reproductive rights activist and an occasional contributor to Sojourner.

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Jamaica Debates Adding Sexual Orientation Protection

This spring, the Jamaican Forum of Lesbians, All Sexuals, and Gays (J-FLAG) launched a campaign for the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender as protected categories in the Jamaican Constitution. The Parliament is discussing amendments to the current bill of rights in the constitution, which declares that discrimination that is based on race, place of origin, political opinions, color, or creed is unconstitutional, according to the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC). IGLHRC is a San Francisco, California-based non-governmental group that monitors and documents human rights abuses against lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgendered (LGBT) people, and people with HIV and AIDS.

In addition to granting protections to LGBT individuals, the proposed addition would decriminalize male homosexual intimacy in Jamaica. The Offences Against the Person Act prohibits "acts of gross indecency" (usually interpreted as referring to any kind of physical intimacy) between men, in public or in private; most prosecutions under this act involve consenting adult men suspected of indulging in the criminal offense of "buggery," or anal sex.

Jamaica has no penal sanctions on lesbian conduct, although queer women are affected by discrimination in employment, housing, and general treatment; women are, however, less likely to face physical violence.

If protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation are amended to the constitution, buggery laws could be declared unconstitutional and then repealed, as recently happened in South Africa and Ecuador.

IGLHRC noted other international precedents for the J-FLAG proposal. In 1994, the United Nations Human Rights Committee evaluated the Tasmanian Criminal Code, which contained elements similar to the Jamaican Gross Indecency Law. The committee found that the provision was discriminatory and failed to protect privacy. The committee also rejected Tasmania's claim that "moral issues are exclusively a domestic concern" and interpreted "sex" in the non-discrimination clause of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights as including sexual orientation.

In addition, a growing number of countries are following the lead of South Africa, whose constitution now specifically mentions sexual orientation as a protected category—Namibia, Switzerland, Canada, and Ecuador have recently amended their constitutions with similar clauses. Chile and the state of Georgia in the United States repealed their sodomy laws in 1999.

—Noy Thrupkaew

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SCAM Takes on MCAS—No More 'High Stakes' Testing

Massachusetts students, parents, and faculty took to the streets on May 15 to protest the next round of standardized testing for public school students, or MCAS. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests public school children in grades three through eight, and also in tenth grade—in English language arts, math, science, and social studies. Students in the class of 2003 must pass the tenth grade English and math sections to be eligible to graduate from high school; private school students are not required to take the exams.

Events organized to protest the testing included a rally on the Boston Common, a procession to the State House to present petitions to Governor Paul Cellucci, and a boycott of the MCAS test by hundreds of students. Boycotting students engaged in a series of work projects, including writing essays about why they were not taking the test, participating in workshops about school assessment systems, and studying the history of boycotts and civil disobedience. The campaign was organized by the Student Coalition for Alternatives to MCAS (SCAM), and the Coalition for Authentic Reform in Education (CARE).

Critics of MCAS argue that the "high-stakes" test is deeply flawed and serves to heighten educational disadvantages for inner-city students, students with limited English proficiency, poor or special-needs students, and students of color. In 1999, more than 90 percent of students in some inner-city neighborhoods did not pass the test, while students from wealthier schools with more resources performed much better. Over 80 percent of African American and Latino children in tenth grade scored in the "failing" category. According to the CARE, one of the organizers of the protests, "Using the MCAS to deny diplomas to students will exacerbate existing racial and class inequities and unfairly punish students attending schools in poor communities."

In addition, school boards are pressuring teachers to "teach to test," by drilling students on superficial material and encouraging rote memorization instead of engaging them in meaningful learning. The approximately $50 million spent on developing and implementing the test, MCAS protesters argue, would be better spent on ensuring smaller class sizes, textbook updates, improved facilities, and professional development for teachers.

CARE proposed an alternative testing plan that would use multiple testing criteria to measure student learning and the quality of public school education across the state. Their framework includes classroom assessments through portfolios, school quality reviews similar to those used in charter schools and throughout England, annual school reports on students from the school, and limited standardized testing.

"Partial Birth Abortion" at the Supreme Court

On April 25, the Supreme Court began considering the constitutionality of a Nebraska state law, widely known as the "partial birth abortion" ban, which ostensibly targets specific late-term abortion procedures. Fighting the ban are prochoice activists, who have charged that the ban's broad and ambiguous crafting can outlaw not only the rare late-term abortions but also procedures performed in the first and second trimesters. The outcome of the case is expected by early July, before the Supreme Court adjourns for summer.

The Nebraska ban prohibits abortions performed for the sake of the woman's health, and would additionally restrict 98 percent of abortions in the state by imposing criminal penalties—including a felony charge and imprisonment for up to twenty years—on doctors who perform abortions. LeRoy Carhart, a Nebraska doctor who challenged the law, is the only remaining physician in the state who does second-trimester abortions.

Nebraska's meager abortion services echo a countrywide trend: 86 percent of U.S. counties had no abortion provider in 1996, the most recent year figures are available, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a health research organization.

Antichoice protesters kept an all-night vigil outside the Supreme Court before arguments were heard, but were met by prochoice supporters from the National Organization of Women (NOW), the National Abortion Federation, and other feminist groups. As attorneys and others filed into the building that morning, the antiabortion protesters played a loud recording of a baby crying, and Flip Benham, a minister who is the leader of Operation Rescue, prayed through a bullhorn.

Inside, prochoice legal sources reported that the Supreme Court appeared ready to overturn the ban, and that the justices seemed skeptical about its constitutionality. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg pointed out that Nebraska legislators had failed to "write a law that specifically banned the D & X procedure [intact dilation and extraction—this is the late-term abortion method often called "partial birth" by antichoice groups, but no specific method is mentioned in the partial abortion ban]." When the defense said that the state was "drawing a bright line between infanticide and abortion," Ginsburg pounced on the word "infanticide," asserting that it is not an appropriate term.

Similar "partial birth abortion" bans have been introduced in 30 states; in 20 of the states, the laws have been blocked or severely limited. This April, the Republican-controlled House voted 287-141 to outlaw "partial birth abortions" for the third time in five years, but the ban's failure in the Senate in October and President Bill Clinton's vow to veto the proposal for the third time have effectively defeated the measure this year.

—Miranda Kennedy

Study Raises Questions about Sexual Reassignment Surgery

According to the Associated Press, a study of biologically male children born without penises—who underwent sex reassignment surgery designed to make them girls—shows that all demonstrated "masculine" behaviors. Most of the children, who were brought up as girls, declared themselves to be boys later in life. The results, Johns Hopkins researchers said, raise new questions about the practice of surgically reassigning the sex of such children. The researchers presented the findings at the Lawson Wilkins Pediatric Endocrine Society meeting in Boston on May 12.

Researchers tracked 27 male children who were born without a penis, a rare condition known as cloacal exstrophy. Although the infants exhibited all other elements of male physiology, including normal testicles, male genes, and hormones, 25 of the children were sex reassigned; the doctors castrated them at birth and their parents brought them up as girls.

Over the years, all of the children, currently ages five to sixteen, "exhibited the rough-and-tumble play of boys," according to the AP. Fourteen declared that they were boys, in one case as early as age five, according to William G. Reiner, a child and adolescent psychiatrist and urologist at the Hopkins Children's Center. "These studies indicate that with time and age, children may well know what their gender is, regardless of any and all information and child-rearing to the contrary." The two children who were not reassigned and were raised as boys fit in well with other male children and were better adjusted psychologically than the reassigned children, Reiner said.

Many feminists and intersex individuals [people born with genitals that are neither clearly female nor male, or have elements of both] and transgender activists support at least elements of these findings, saying that sex reassignment surgery performed on the basis of a child

Continued on next page

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having no penis reveals an understanding of "masculinity" and other aspects of sexuality and gender that is too limited.

However, some feminist critics question some of the conclusions drawn from the research, including the notion that the findings "suggest . . . that gender identity is determined in the womb," according to the Associated Press. This claim, many activists have argued, fails to account for the complicated roles that cultural conditioning and individual circumstance play in the construction of gender, as opposed to the biological elements of sex. The AP report does not indicate whether or not the children were also hormonally reassigned to be female, or whether they exhibited secondary sex characteristics typically associated with maleness like facial hair, lack of breasts, etc.

Some critics have also noted that the language of the report itself indicates stereotypical understandings of boys and girls; pointing out, for example, "the rough-and-tumble play of boys." There was no definition in the report of what it means to raise a child "as a boy" or "as a girl."

A growing movement opposing sexual reassignment surgery on any child for any reason argues that such surgery is mutilation, causes severe sexual dysfunction, and that the procedure and those subjected to it are inevitably shrouded in shame and secrecy. For more information about this effort and about intersexuality, contact the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) at info@isna.org.

—Noy Thrupkaew

No Feminist Agenda for President Barbie?

Long associated with eating disorders and crass materialism by her detractors, Barbie is getting a political makeover. Decked out in a power suit and Hillary-esque blond bob, President Barbie launched her campaign from Toys R Us stores around the nation on May 1. Though some are wondering if President Barbie will make young girls lust more for low-heeled pumps than political savvy, her creators argue that they are showing why girls and women are just as worthy of taking a seat in the Oval Office as men, according to an Internet article at AlterNet.

Marie Wilson, president of the nonpartisan White House Project of the Women's Leadership Fund, dreamed up President Barbie as a way to include young girls in the fund's mission of creating political leadership opportunities for women. Available in Latina, Caucasian, and African American models, the doll even has a platform that includes "equality," "world peace," and "animal kindness," but no mention of any anti-sexism or gender-specific campaigns.

Wilson first approached Barbie's manufacturer, Mattel, with the idea of "turning the dream house into the White House" last year. Girls Inc., a national organization with the goal of "inspir[ing] girls to be strong, smart, and bold," then hopped on the President Barbie bandwagon.

Pointing out that girls all over the nation have an average of eight Barbies, Wilson explained the goals of launching President Barbie, saying, "If you want to normalize the culture, you have to go to where the girls are."

Each President Barbie comes with a copy of the White House Project's Girls' Action Agenda, written to foster girls' leadership skills. The Girls Inc. Girls' Bill of Rights is also included, which asserts the right of girls to "be themselves and to resist gender stereotypes." Ironically, Barbie critics have noted, the bill of rights also mentions that girls "have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies."

The doll and the Girls' Action Agenda are part of the White House Project's Pipeline to the Presidency project, which includes a national discussion with eighteen to twenty-four year-olds on women in power, and a straw poll and national survey on possible women vice presidents.

Neither the White House Project nor Girls Inc. attempt to deny some of Barbie's more problematic features, but say they are "trying to add an element to Barbie that hasn't existed before," according to White House Project communications director James Devitt.

Jodi Heintz, assistant director of communications for Girls Inc., asserted that the organization was fully aware of the bad press Barbie has received. "We understand the ramifications as well as the positive points," she said. "But if we really want to reach girls, for better or for worse, we have to reach girls through pop cultural mediums."

Too bad this medium doesn't reflect all the members of her possible constituency—there is no Asian American or Native American President Barbie. Though the White House Project and Girls Inc. supported the idea of an Asian American doll, Mattel refused.

When questioned about the lack of an Asian American doll, Mattel spokesperson Julia Jensem replied, "The three communities that really respond to having a doll in their ethnic background [are African Americans, Caucasians, and Latinos]. If the demand grows [among Asian Americans for an Asian American doll], believe us, you'll see it."

Another factor has critics questioning if Barbie's political makeover is anything but skin deep. President Barbie's body is the traditional Barbie body—huge plastic bust, nipped-in waist, and perpetually pointed feet—that many have criticized as maintaining unrealistic and oppressive standards of beauty for young girls.

Despite these concerns, Bettina Aptheker, a women's studies professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz, said that the doll has the potential to influence young girls positively. "The appearance of President Barbie seems at first glance like something of a contradiction in terms because of the many associations I have with 'Barbie' and her very name with its 'cutesy' and traditionally frilly, feminine connotations. Yet the concept as it is presented could be very empowering for young girls."

Wilson agreed, saying, "I want girls to be focused on their power—the power that a girl can be the president of the United States." As for concerns about Barbie's body, Wilson responded, "Her brain is anatomically correct."

—Noy Thrupkaew

Homophobia in the Name of the Lord: LGBT Rights and 'Religious Freedom' Clash on College Campuses

In clashes highlighting the growing conflict between evangelical Christian student groups and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students on col-

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Dimock "Body & Soul" Health Forum

The Dimock Community Health Center in Roxbury, Massachusetts, held its fourth annual Women's Health Forum, entitled "Body & Soul: The Wellness Connection" on May 12. Susan L. Taylor, publications director of Essence Communications, Inc., delivered the keynote address. The forum also featured ten workshops and forty speeches from nationally acclaimed medical experts, including co-chairs Joan Reede, associate dean for Faculty Development & Diversity at Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts; and Gloria White-Hammond, pediatrician at South End Community Health Center and co-minister of Bethel AME Church in Massachusetts.

U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters of California also addressed the forum and received the Mary Eliza Mahoney Community Health Award "given in appreciation for outstanding community service and advocacy." Mary Eliza Mahoney, the nation's first African American professional nurse, graduated from Dimock's predecessor, the New England Hospital for Women's and Children.

This year, the forum expanded to include a second day of activities on May 13, entitled: "A Call for Healing—Women in Prison: Families in Crisis" that was co-sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee. Tina Williams, outreach educator with the Multicultural AIDS Coalition, presented the keynote address. *[See an edited version of Williams's speech on page 48.]*

lege campuses, Tufts University and Middlebury College are currently embroiled in debates over whether to penalize Christian groups that refuse to allow queer students to run for leadership positions.

A branch of the Tufts student government has "derecognized" the Tufts Christian Fellowship, preventing the organization from using the school's name, meeting in Tufts classrooms, spending student activity fees, or publicizing its events through the university, according to the *Boston Globe*.

In Vermont, administrators, faculty, and students are deciding whether to require the Middlebury Christian Fellowship to allow LGBT students to hold leadership positions, a move that the religious group says would compel it to leave the campus.

In Iowa, evangelical students at Grinnell College are attempting to regain official recognition after the college stripped them of their status as a student group for demanding that student leaders agree that only heterosexual married partners should have sex.

The dispute at Tufts began when Julie Catalano, a junior who had been an active member of the Tufts Christian Fellowship since her first year at the school, told leaders of the group that she wanted to be a senior leader next year. One group leader told Catalano that she was ineligible because she believed that homosexual activity is not wrong.

Catalano, a member of the United Church of Christ who hopes to attend divinity school, said that after praying to Jesus to make her heterosexual and even considering suicide, she decided that her homosexuality could not be altered, nor was it sinful.

Catalano then quit the group and challenged its eligibility to use student fees.

The Tufts student government declared the Tufts Christian Fellowship "derecognized," saying that the group had violated a university policy banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Of the student government decision, Catalano said, "I'm not challenging [the Tufts Christian Fellowship's] right to hold their beliefs, nor am I challenging their freedom of association, but I don't think pulling their recognition or funding violates either of those two constitutional rights."

The evangelical group is appealing the decision to a student-faculty committee, arguing that they should not be forced to grant a leadership post to someone who doesn't share their religious beliefs. "We welcome members of any sexual orientation to be members of our group, but don't take a sledgehammer to our religious principles," said Curtis Chang, an affiliate chaplain at Tufts, and the Boston director of InterVarsity, an umbrella organization of college evangelical groups.

The Middlebury dispute has not escalated to the same degree, but the student evangelical organization said that the school had already frozen its funds. The college administration is debating its response to the group's refusal to allow a gay male student to run for a leadership position.

Conservatives and some civil libertarians have protested the rise of what they describe as discrimination against Christian groups on college campuses. "What Tufts and Middlebury are really saying is that the view that the Bible takes is an illegitimate view, and you can get thrown off campus for it," said Elliott Abrams, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington. "That's bigotry."

Civil libertarian Harvey A. Silverglate, who helped create the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, a group in Philadelphia supporting the Tufts evangelicals, apparently concurs. He told the *Globe*, "Orthodox Christians and Catholics have a really hard time on liberal arts campuses today, and the reason for that is that so many of their views conflict with the prevailing notion that there should be equality for gays and equality for women."

LGBT rights advocates assert that college groups should not be able to use student activity fees to discriminate against queer individuals and should not be allowed to circumvent the nondiscrimination polices of universities simply because they are religious.

Note: As *Sojourner* goes to press, the Tufts student-faculty Committee on Student Life has voted to reinstate the Tufts Christian Fellowship as a student organization. The committee ruled that the group's due process rights had been violated by the failure of the Tufts student government to hold a hearing before issuing the ban, and recommended that the judiciary branch conduct another hearing in the fall. Chang lauded the decision, noting that its timing would allow the Christian group to promote itself to incoming first-year students next fall.

—Noy Thrupkaew

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YWCA Mother/Daughter Brunch & Health Benefit

On May 6, the YWCA Boston held its fifth annual "Mothers & Daughters Brunch for Good Health," a benefit for the Y's Encore^{Plus} initiative, a nationwide breast and cervical health education and outreach program.

The program is designed to serve women over 50, women of color, and underinsured or uninsured women through seminars, screening referrals, and follow-up support. In the past four years, the YWCA Boston has reached more than 5,000 women annually and has facilitated the screening of more than 3,000 women in the Boston area through its program.

Speakers at the brunch included Helen E. Cajigas, director of the Departments of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine and Cytopathology at Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates; Bettye L. Green, a member of the board of directors of the National Breast Cancer Coalition and founder of Women in Touch, African-American Women Against Breast Cancer; and Lisa Montes, a two-and-a-half-year survivor of breast cancer based at the Y-Me Breast Cancer Foundation, Latina Services in Chicago, Illinois.

Anti-LGBT Violence Increases Nationwide

Reported incidents of anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) crimes in the United States declined slightly in 1999, but the incidents were more violent than in 1998 and affected more transgender individuals, according to a report released by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), a network of 25 community organizations that monitors and responds to anti-LGBT violence nationwide.

The study documented an overall decrease of three percent in incidents reported—from 2,017 in 1998 to 1,965 in 1999. However, the NCAVP documented a thirteen percent increase in the number of murders, from 26 to 29 between 1998 and 1999. The proportion of 1999 incidents that were assaults and attempted assaults remained constant from 1998's high rate, as did the proportion of victims who sustained serious injuries. Assaults with bats/clubs, firearms, and vehicles—the most deadly categories of weapons monitored by the NCAVP—increased significantly.

Verbal harassment and intimidation declined modestly by six and eight percent respectively. Incidents perpetrated by organized hate groups declined by 32 percent. However, the number of incidents committed by groups of ten or more people increased by 89 percent.

Though the numbers of police officers reported as offenders dropped by 36 percent, law enforcement made disproportionately fewer arrests for the crimes reported, and refused to classify them as being bias crimes at higher rates.

As for the slight decrease in the total number of anti-LGBT incidents, the report noted that the decrease was not a widespread trend. Of the thirteen NCAVP groups that contributed findings for the report, only four reported a decline of anti-LGBT crimes in their regions: Detroit, Michigan; New York, New York; St. Louis, Missouri; and San Francisco, California. All nine others—Central Coast, California; Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio; the state of Colorado; Columbus, Ohio; Houston, Texas; Los Angeles, California; the state of Massachusetts; and Providence, Rhode Island—reported increases between 1998 and 1999, by percentages ranging from 7 percent in Columbus, Ohio, to 116 percent in Chicago, Illinois. The mean of the increases was more than forty percent.

Who Are the Victims?

The report's statistics on the victims noted an increase in the number of female victims from 538 in 1998 to 548 in 1999. The number of male-to-female transgendered victims rose from 125 to 152, and the number of female-to-male victims rose from 13 to 21. In addition, the number of victims who identified as heterosexual rose 35 percent.

The racial breakdown of the reported victims remained fairly constant, with white individuals representing approximately 60 percent; African Americans, 14 percent; Latinos/as, 13 percent; and Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multiracial, and Native American victims at 3 percent or less.

The ages of the victims also remained fairly constant—46 percent were between 30 and 44. Percentages of victims under 18 remained steady at 5 percent—a low percentage, the report asserts, that reflects severe underreporting due to a lack of youth-oriented services in almost all reporting regions and the elimination of an adolescent program in Massachusetts two years ago. The reporting Massachusetts group, drawing on the findings of the program for adolescents, reported 57 victims under eighteen in 1997, versus six last year.

The general findings of the report, according to its authors, are similarly affected by underreporting because of a lack of funding for outreach, along with geographical limitations. Two of the most prominently covered 1999 anti-LGBT murders—that of Billy Jack Gaither in Alabama and Pfc. Barry L. Winchell in Kentucky—were not included in the report's statistics because the NCAVP has no member organizations that address anti-LGBT violence in these states. The NCAVP also receives no funding for the report, nor is there federally sponsored research or a coordinated public campaign to address and investigate anti-LGBT violence.

The report also compiled a series of recommendations to fight anti-LGBT violence. One new suggestion was to disqualify the "gay panic defense" as a legal resort for those accused of hate crimes against LGBT people. "Gay panic defense" refers to the argument that a victim made sexual overtures that prompted a defendant's violent actions.

Other recommendations included the adoption of tolerance education curricula for youth, commission of a federal study on anti-LGBT violence, enforcement of enhanced penalties of hate crimes against LGBT individuals, and implementation of enhanced rehabilitation for the perpetrators of anti-LGBT crimes. The report also urged increased funding for LGBT community anti-violence groups and the recruitment of openly LGBT individuals in law enforcement.

Massachusetts Findings Reflect National Trends

Anti-LGBT crime rose 20 percent in Massachusetts in 1999, from 145 incidents to 174. Seventy-three percent of the victims were male, sixteen percent female, and three percent transgendered. Though incidents involving transgendered people decreased by 54 percent, the Massachusetts report indicates that the smaller number points to a need for increased outreach to transgendered communities rather than an actual decrease in the crimes against transgendered people.

Incidents targeting LGBT organizations increased by 36 percent. The report noted that such attacks potentially affected the visibility and activism of LGBT groups on issues including hate crimes legislation and same-sex marriage.

Nine heterosexual individuals were attacked, targeted because they were perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered, or because of their support of or affiliation with LGBT communities.

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The Escalating Contest between Capital and People

An interview with anti-globalization activist Vandana Shiva

By Tatiana Schreiber

"Be engaged, never give up, and live with hope." That admonition came from Indian anti-globalization activist Vandana Shiva during a recent visit to Boston. Someone had asked her the inevitable question about how we can keep organizing—given the enormous social and environmental devastation wrought by economic globalization. Shiva herself epitomizes her answer—she's deeply engaged, she won't give up, and she believes this is the moment to reclaim our control over our lives and what happens to our environment. Shiva has written or co-written thirteen books; she directs the Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Ecology in New Delhi, India, which has just released a new manuscript entitled "License to Kill: How the Unholy Trinity—the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization—are Killing Livelihoods, Environment, and Democracy in India." She is a key activist in the anti-globalization movement, and a member of the International Forum on Globalization, which played a lead role in organizing the Seattle protests against the policies of the World Trade Organization, the Biodevastation 2000 conference in Boston focusing on the dangers of biotechnology, and the recent April actions against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Washington, D.C.

Shiva grew up in the Himalayan region of India and trained as a particle physicist. She had worked at an Indian nuclear energy research facility before becoming an activist around agriculture, ecology, and intellectual property rights issues. In 1993 Shiva was awarded the Right Livelihood "Alternative Nobel" Peace Prize, an alternative prize given to people working on sustainability. Currently she is working with the Council for Responsible Genetics on their "No Patents on Life" campaign, and she's also spearheading the "Campaign to Stop Trade-Related Cruelty," which looks at the real social costs of ever-expanding free trade.

Understanding Globalization

In some ways, "globalization" is a difficult concept to grasp. One can talk about not only economic globalization but also political, social, cultural, technological, and psychological changes that are shaping our world, and threatening to change or even erase current notions of cultural identity and community. It can be argued, however, that economic globalization is the centripetal force driving all the other changes. So what does economic globalization mean, where does the WTO fit in, and why are people talking about seeds and agriculture? The world economy has been "global" for a long time, but in recent decades the power of transnational corporations (TNCs) to essentially dictate national policy wherever these corporations operate has escalated to a dramatic degree. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) were both established after WWII to regulate international trade and commerce, but they did not have extensive power to organize the political lives of individual nations. However, the expansion of the GATT, the development of additional trade agreements like NAFTA, the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the activity of the IMF and World Bank in shaping the political economies of recipient countries have all worked to push a U.S.-style market economy on the rest of the world. Under the new free trade agreements, any member country can challenge the laws and practices of another as a violation of the agreement and an impediment to free trade.

The World Trade Organization was formed in 1995 as a global commerce organization, empowered to enforce trade rules the organization establishes. The WTO regulates not only tariffs and import quotas but anything considered "trade-related." Thus, the WTO can limit the strength of a country's food safety or labeling laws if these can be seen as a barrier to trade. The WTO's reach extends not only to the national level but to state and local regulations as well. (For an excellent examination of the WTO, see *Whose Trade Organization?* by Lori Wallach and Michelle Sforza, published by Public Citizen.)

In the late 1980s, the Uruguay Round of GATT was launched; at that time, the biotechnology industry worked to include agricultural biotechnology and trade-related intellectual property rights under GATT. Intellectual property rights are designed to protect the "products of the mind"—that is, the intellectual creativity that enables genetic engineers to come up with ideas such as transplanting the genes responsible for the production of caffeine into soybeans, so as to produce coffee from soy. But intellectual creativity, as defined by the TRIPs laws (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) in the GATT, does not recognize the creativity and innovation that has occurred through many centuries on the part of farmers and others who have nurtured and developed seed. Instead, only TNCs like Monsanto and Cargill are now able to patent whole species of plants.

The state was supposed to be the buffer between people and commercial interests. Instead it has become the agent of unlimited greed for corporate accumulation of power and wealth.

For example, Shiva writes in her most recent book, *Stolen Harvest*, that a company called RiceTec now holds a patent on a particular variety of Basmati rice which it claims has a distinct aroma that is "novel" because it is similar to good quality traditional Basmati rice. As Shiva notes, it's hard to figure how a particular "innovation" can be both novel and traditional at the same time, but that's how it goes when the idea of intellectual property is applied to food that has been grown for centuries. Similarly, W.R. Grace has a number of patents on products made from the Neem tree and used as pesticides, although historically people in India have freely used Neem. It is this effort to privatize and control for corporate profit what had previously been part of the "intellectual commons" that Shiva and others are fighting against.

Shiva argues that globalization perpetuates the concept (and reality) of monocultures. When homogenization is imposed on diverse cultural or biological systems in order to achieve maximum profits for industry, Shiva believes that violence will inevitably follow because communities, knit together through diversity, disintegrate. Shiva often uses ecological metaphors to explore what she believes is happening to societies in the throes of globalizing forces. She writes that communities become fragmented and lose their capacity to "self-organize," in the way that ecosystems also become fragmented, following disturbances, to such a degree that they cannot regenerate. But, like ecosystems, Shiva believes that human cultural communities can recover if we find a way to cultivate diversity "as a conscious and creative act." One of the ways this is happening is in the Seed Satyagraha movement in India, which aims to reclaim for farmers the right to save and modify (through careful breeding, not genetic engineering) the seeds of the crops they grow. In her book *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*, Shiva writes, "[I]n the seed, cultural diversity converges with biological diversity. Ecological issues combine with social justice, peace, and democracy."

Vandana Shiva

Metaphor and Documentation

As someone deeply concerned with both environmental degradation and cultural survival, I find Shiva's ideas inspiring. Shiva is a master of metaphor, and her writing is lively, accessible, and persuasive. Her sweeping statements, however, sometimes simplify matters to such a degree that the skeptical reader is left wondering how closely her rhetoric resembles reality. Frequently in Shiva's work, apparently damning evidence is cited to support her statements, yet insufficient information is provided to actually track down the sources. For example, in *Stolen Harvest*, Shiva writes that in India, under pressure from TNCs to use new hybrid seed varieties and expensive pesticides, some 400 farmers committed suicide after crops failed in 1997. Four hundred suicides in one year is such a dramatic statistic, one might want to follow up on it—but no references are provided. And, more troubling, some of Shiva's science writing conflates divergent research in a way that is misleading. In discussing what she calls "soy imperialism," for example, Shiva writes that soybeans are being pushed "as a global substitute for diverse foods in diverse cultures." She argues that soybeans are inherently unhealthy because they contain high levels of plant-based estrogenic compounds. She equates all forms of estrogen when she implies that the estrogens in soy may cause miscarriages, infertility, and vaginal cancer. The sources cited for this refer to the consequences of taking synthetic estrogens—specifically DES—not naturally occurring plant-based estrogens, which other research suggests may actually protect against cancer. In galvanizing activism against the anti-democratic and environmentally destructive aspects of globalization, it is urgent that writers and public speakers provide information that can be backed up with solid evidence, not scary and misleading hyperbole. Because Shiva's voice is so eloquent and impassioned, I hope she and her editors will sharpen their documentation skills, as they continue to get that voice heard. In between her many talks, workshops, and meetings Vandana Shiva recently found time to tell *Sojourner* a little about her work.

Tatiana Schreiber: *How did you get involved in this work as an activist on behalf of women, small farmers, and the environment?*

Vandana Shiva: I was trained as a physicist, and that's what I thought I'd be doing all my life, but I got involved in this movement of grassroots women in the Himalayan region to defend our forests. I come from the mountains, my childhood had been spent in the region, and both my parents had exposed us to agriculture and farming; my mother had chosen to be a farmer, giving up a very senior level educational job, and my father was a forestry worker, so my background was also in

Continued on next page

Interview with Vandana Shiva

Continued from page 23

that. When this movement burst, that's where I volunteered, and I found I was spending more and more time helping the women, drafting reports for them to counter the government reports. After doing this on a volunteer basis for three years while teaching and having an academic career, I realized there was no point splitting my life into two, in terms of where my conscience took me in my life, and where my bread and butter came from.

I just decided to trust life, and jump, and jumped out of university and have literally been following my conscience. Each time there's something very outrageous and there's some group or community that calls, saying, "We'd like you to help," that's how my life has traveled, like a river, like a tree . . . there's no predetermined direction to it—I've responded to any responsibility that comes my way.

You are incredibly energetic! Has your early connection with the forest and with nature influenced your ability to keep going with your work?

Definitely, definitely. I think my early affinity for the forest, in farms, in villages, has shaped my path very much, in the sense that I have not taken it as a punishment to be in a forest and not in a disco. To me [the forest] has been always the place for enlightenment. Nature has always been the place where I find peace. Over years and years of reflecting and observing and interacting, I have refused to fall into the trap of assuming that nature is deficient, diseased, and needs to be mutilated by us to provide for our needs, and that we have to wipe out other species to have adequate fulfillment of our food, clothing, other basic needs.

You've written about the relationship of cultural diversity to biological diversity. What is the crux of this connection?

You can't really have biodiversity without cultural diversity. And you can't have cultural diversity without biodiversity. The different plants and crops in different regions have shaped the cultures that are there. In temperate regions people eat meat

What globalization has basically done is rob people of all their rights, and it has done this so cleverly, by writing laws higher than our national laws through the World Trade Organization.

because you can't grow vegetables in the snow, whereas in the tropical regions, like India, where nature gives an abundance of vegetables and plants, what has been shaped are vegetarian societies. The way we have designed our medical systems has come partly from the kind of diseases the particular ecosystem creates and the cures that it offers. Languages have been shaped by this, imagery has been shaped by this, our rituals have been shaped by biodiversity. Every festival, in its deep embeddedness, is actually a celebration of biodiversity—its timing, its content, is absolutely shaped by biodiversity, so the two are absolutely nonseparable.

In Stolen Harvest *you argued that there are "two cultures of science": one based on public accountability and responsibility, and the other based on profits and lack of accountability. Can you say more about this?*

For the last five years we have seen tremendous resistance by people around the world against genetic engineering. We have also seen scientific information pouring out about the ecological hazards and health risks linked to genetically engineered foods. And yet, each time the scientific debate about the ecological risks of genetically modified organisms becomes heightened, the U.S. official position is, "That's culture, that's emotion, we only deal with science." The fascinating thing is, the one part of the world where science is not being practiced is in the regulatory agencies of the United States, which are totally captured and held ransom and distort scientific facts.

[They have] this position of sound science versus culture, or sound science versus junk science. It is definitely the case that there are two kinds of science: a reductionist science that is not able to perceive relationships, impacts, and interactions—and ecological risks and health risks are precisely about ecological impacts and relationships with other species. It's a blind, blinkered approach to science where you just decide organisms are made of genes, genes determine traits, and we have determined this particular gene has this trait and we'll move it around, and we will engineer life and it will behave exactly as we predicted. That's not how it goes.

We'll get to the other culture of science, but say more about the unpredictability of genetic engineering.

That in fact is the view of every scientist who does serious science and honest science, and independent science. I have been a visiting professor for many years at universities in Norway; last year the Norwegian government took this very bold step to

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launch what they call the Program for Gene Ecology, to counter a reductionist genetic science and to really understand how genes act in their context. What happens when you introduce genes into organisms where they don't belong? How does the behavior of that organism change? How does the relationship of that organism with the environment change? And all the research is showing that it is totally unpredictable.

So, what about the other culture that you've called "public science?"

Well, a public scientist is a scientist who works in the public interest, who works in the full recognition that knowledge is generated by public support. A public scientist is public all the way, both in the processes through which knowledge is generated, the ends for which knowledge is gained, and in the support to the scientists coming from the public domain. What we are seeing is a rapid enclosure of public science through tiny amounts of financing by corporations, who are then taking the results of decades of research, turning it into their intellectual property and starting to distort facts related to science. When science is servant to corporate interests and private interests, it is no more science. It is no more a search for knowledge and truth.

You have been very active around the concept of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights, such as the rights corporations are claiming over specific species of plants and seeds. You've argued that many aspects of life should not come under the purview of "rights" at all—but if we don't speak of individual rights, what language can we use to talk about these issues?

We talk about the stealing of common rights, and that is the way we have defined the intellectual property rights campaign and struggle from its very beginning. I define it as the enclosure of the intellectual and biological commons [or collective rights]; that patents and intellectual property rights as defined in the GATT and WTO are really an enclosure of what were the commons. And just because it's the commons doesn't mean it doesn't belong to you. These rights might not belong to you individually but they belong to you in the common. Being in the common is necessary for things like seed, because otherwise the seed is not accessible to you. This privatization of life through patenting is undermining the collective rights of people. Now any society that has collective rights has first of all common responsibilities. We have common responsibilities to save seed and conserve water.

That's why every Indian prays to water each day. We sow seed, we pray. Every community I work with, the day they harvest, they pray; the day they sow seeds, they pray; the day they put seeds aside for the next planting, they pray. And that notion, of having duties to conserve the seed, to conserve the water, to share it freely, is the basis of rights. In cultures where rights are held in common, rights are not the beginning; responsibility is the beginning. And rights flow out of that, in a very obvious and natural way. This for me personally has been a very important issue I've learned through life itself. You know, in feminism we've always said the personal is political, and for me, the aspect of rights without responsibility which is what patenting signifies, is also how patriarchy functions.

Can you give an example of that?

Right at the peak of fighting the intellectual property rights laws in India I was also fighting the natural guardianship laws. Our laws were based on the absolute rights of men. The natural guardianship laws are Anglo Saxon laws that said men are the natural guardians of children, and will always have rights about making decisions for them, and it doesn't matter if a mother looks after her children, the absolute rights will be with the man. The separation of rights from responsibilities is something I challenge. I said, "No, responsibility is what determines the rights of a parent. You first have to look after your child, and if you do, then you get a certain kind of right, to be able to carry out your responsibility." So, rights are a) derived, and b) about common welfare. They are not individualistic. And having worked for a decade on these issues, I can tell you this is at the core of the struggle, because corporate America is so threatened by the notion of people looking after each other.

You and members of the International Forum on Globalization have been trying to develop and articulate a vision that would provide an alternative to the one proposed by the free traders and the globalizers. What does it look like?

Our alternative vision comes basically from our alternative engagement. The first tenet is that while economic globalization has been the mantra of the last few years, economic localization is what societies really need, which means not that you should only produce locally everything you need, but what you can produce locally, you should, because of the ecological imperative and the social imperative. The ecological imperative comes from the fact that it's only through local economies that you can really build sustainable economies, and the social imperative comes from the fact that unless you are producing the things you need, how on earth will you have enough livelihoods, and jobs, and employment? So localization is one tenet. It's not isolationist, but, it's a constant recontextualizing of how human beings meet their needs, how we organize our societies.

But this cannot hang by itself. It has to go with decentralization in terms of democratic decision-making. We've lived through half a century where it's been assumed that democracy is going once every four or five years and putting in a vote. There's a deep crisis in that notion of democracy because it doesn't matter who you put in place, it doesn't matter the color, or the name of the party, because today policies are shaped by corporate governance. Corporate states, even though they are elected by people, are not functioning for people.

Gross national product is based on the definition that if you are producing for yourself, you are not producing. That's the definition that wiped out nature's production, women's production, & Third World production.

We cannot change the structures that are destroying people's livelihoods and threatening the planet, unless we change the notion of democracy and have people reclaiming their rights to decide whether the underground aquifer of this particular region will serve the community or be privatized by Coca-Cola. What will be the price at which electricity will be afforded by the community? What will be the mode of electricity: solar, nuclear? These are issues that need to be decided in as decentralized a manner as is possible. It is because the devastation of globalization is so severe that we believe people should start becoming far more active to rejuvenate their decision-making and shape what we call economic democracy. The alternative to economic globalization and corporate totalitarianism is economic democracy—and devolving power and decentralizing production are two very central elements of it.

Both supporters and opponents of globalization have raised the question of the loss of sovereignty by nations as a result of economic globalization. Do you think the nation-state is really under threat?

At this point in globalization I do not agree that the nation-state is weakening [in terms of its ability] to act on behalf of corporations, but it is weakening [in its ability] to defend the public interest and the welfare of citizens. What we have is an inverted state. After all, why did the state get created? To put limits on the levels of appropriation and threat to people from commercial behavior and commercial activity—it was supposed to be the buffer between people and commercial interests. Instead it has become the agent of unlimited greed for corporate accumulation of power and wealth. How we reinvent national governance beyond the familiar functions—and today the *malfunctions*—of the nation-state is really in the hands of citizens, and that's the democratic revolution of our times.

So you see this as a moment of confrontation between capital and people?

Yes, what globalization has basically done is rob people of all their rights, and it has done this so cleverly, by writing laws higher than our national laws through the World Trade Organization. The WTO, in spite of all the complex language of market access and export competition and quantitative restriction, is nothing else but a charter of corporate rights. Those corporate rights cannot be built without denying citizens their fundamental rights to choose what systems they function in, to decide what laws will shape their lives via their elected representatives, and in certain areas, directly, what kind of school systems, health systems, or agriculture they will have.

If you really look at the structure legally, you have absolute rights for capital and no rights for people; a system with that kind of perversion—where a construction gets rights higher than human beings, and human beings are absolutely disenfranchised. This is a threat to life in all its diversity, to other species, women, children, poor people, middle class people, the North and the South. All you have to do is let the logic unfold in your mind, to see where it could go, much further than it's already gone, in terms of [corporations] trying to own water, own seeds, own life; what we have is a very direct contest between capital and people, and it will either be people at the center of human organizing, or it will be capital. Either capital will rule, or people will rule, and I work for the rule of people.

When you spoke in Boston you mentioned that you were not an economist and perhaps that was why you were able to see so clearly the problems with our current economic paradigms.

[laughing] I think there was already enough wrong in the economic paradigm without economic globalization, and what was wrong was that it assumed that value gets created only when we stop producing for *ourselves*. The definition of gross national product—that it's an assessment of how much you buy what you need, or produce for sale—was based on the definition that if you are producing for yourself, you are *not* producing. That's the definition that wiped out nature's production, wiped out women's production, wiped out Third World production, and it's at the heart of how economic growth is measured. So economic growth by its very nature becomes anti-woman, anti-Third World, and anti-nature.

Then we get economic globalization, like a huge cyclone, that basically now says, unless you are *internationally* trading in everything that you need, unless you are buying from outside, you are not

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Books by Vandana Shiva

Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply. (South End Press, 2000)

Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge. (South End Press, 1997.)

Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology (Zed Books, 1993.)

The Violence of the Green Revolution (Zed Books, 1992)

Biodiversity: Social and Ecological Consequences (Zed Books, 1992)

Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development (St. Martin's Press, 1989)

Interview with Vandana Shiva

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contributing to the economic growth of the planet. They've taken that even further and instead of having money reflect the value that humans create, money now has a life of its own; it can multiply itself to the extent of moving around at the rate of three trillion dollars a day, an absurdity on which the entire security of the human population is being based. All institutions that generate real security are being distorted just to move more money into the stock market, just to allow more people to make more money on that, and that is precisely the place where economics now needs to change. [Money is] replacing the real life interactions between people, the mutual obligations that we have, across generations, across genders, across class, across race, and that is where real security gets generated.

One final question: You do much of your cross-cultural and international organizing work around issues of food and agriculture. Is food an especially good focus for this cross-cultural and international organizing?

I've been forced to organize around food for the last sixteen years of my life. I did not choose to track biotech, I did not really choose to work on agriculture. I was forced into it by the circumstances around me, the near civil war conditions [farmers were facing] in the Punjab, droughts, seed failure, the threats from patenting on seed. I've had to learn how to organize to find creative ways to respond to a totalitarianism around food. In the process, I have learned that this is one aspect of life that can connect us all, because no matter where you are, at the farming end of things, at the consuming end of things, you can be rich or you can be poor, the one thing you can't get away from is food. And because it's so central to life it reminds us that we are biological beings, and being biological beings we are also cultural beings.

[In the realm of food] we can become free of being redefined as mere consumers, as just one other cog in the machine of the industrial production system. Then all kinds of shifts start to happen and citizens start redefining the conditions under which they live and die. That is a revolution that is already underway; that is the revolution that was literally able to throw the genetic engineering companies out of Europe, it's the revolution that is turning thousands and thousands of farmers into organic producers. It's the revolution that is changing intellectual paradigms, because to run industrial food systems, to run genetic engineering systems, and to run free trade systems in food, global corporations have to lie all the way.

In the area of food, most people are starting to recognize that they don't have to think via the propaganda of Monsanto, they don't have to think through the lies of the FDA, they can think for themselves. That is making citizens aware, and is making them reclaim their democratic rights. Even though [food may] seem to be such a minor aspect of life, it is the most fundamental aspect of life, and it is the place where the biggest change will come.

Tatiana Schreiber is a freelance writer and radio producer and a doctoral candidate in environmental studies at Antioch New England Graduate School in Keene, New Hampshire.

Noah's Ark

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There was some negative vocal reaction to the ceremony from some members of the congregation, but I think that was in large part because people weren't prepared for the idea. My sentiment is that people who have no experience with an issue from a personal point of view have a much harder time dealing with it. (And I also think there are generational differences.) In another congregation, a rabbi who was planning on doing a same-sex ceremony gave a sermon about it and told the board what he was planning to do. So there was awareness, which made a difference. For the most part, I think Temple Israel's congregation manifests either an incredible warm acceptance or what I call "hesitant silence," which allows someone time to get used to the idea. A couple of months ago, there was a naming ceremony for a little baby girl. As both her mothers came forward, someone sitting in the congregation heard an older person sitting behind him say, "Where's the father?" But it was really no different than the baby naming I did two weeks ago where a single mother decided she was going to have a baby. Because we have such a variety and diversity of relationships in our urban congregation, lesbian and gay relationships are not so much of an anomaly anymore. It's just part of the fabric of our congregation. I see that more and more.

Do you see this connected to other political issues, for example, anti-Semitism?

It's the perennial issue of people engaging in the "dislike of the unlike." Anti-Semitism came about in many ways because it was a dislike of the unlike. Jews weren't "like us," so they are unacceptable. If you're in an interfaith, interracial, or gay and lesbian relationship, you're not in what I call the "Noah's Ark" format, where you get into the Ark when you come two by two, male and female, same species. But a congregation is not Noah's Ark. There's a lot of diversity in the congregational community. That's why I am so proud of being a part of the Reform rabbinate, because it has done pioneering work, sticking its neck out in the greater community to say that this was an important issue.

Why is this issue important for you as a heterosexual person?

I think it goes back to the personal relationship. I know the gay and lesbian Jews who are part of the congregation, and since I see no difference between them and me, I want for them what I want for any other member of the congregation. To accept everyone from where they come is part of my rabbinate. When I sense that someone feels disengaged because they have been excluded because of their sexual orientation or because of their gender or because of anything else, I want in my inner being to reach out and bring them in. And that for me has really been my impetus for being involved in this and a myriad of other issues.

Elaine Zecher was ordained as a Reform rabbi in 1988, and vowed she would never work in a congregation. After two years at a Jewish Community Center, she realized she missed being involved in people's lifecycle events, and came to Temple Israel in Boston in 1990, where she has just celebrated her tenth anniversary.

Vicki Gabriner is the executive director of Sojourner Feminist Institute.

Rainbow Tupperware Party

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She's walking with a small group of people, some of them are in chains—it must be her. *This* is where I belong. Forget Massachusetts, I call to Patrick, follow those purple pants!

We stumble towards them through the crowd—they aren't really very hard to spot. It seems they've just decided to jump in wherever, and so we are all marching with Georgia Tech. Tristan is waving to everyone like it's her parade and they all should know who she is. The Georgia Tech students are singing, "If you're gay and you know it clap your hands." Somehow I don't think they know who she is. I get the feeling they haven't seen the three-hour porn extravaganza she made based on her book *The Ultimate Guide to Anal Sex for Women*. But I have. I love her, I love her, *I love her*.

I decide to take back all my criticisms. This is the best march I've ever been on. Now we are walking right next to Tristan's group, but of course I can't think of anything to say. My limited experience of queer celebrity stalking thus far has only included cutting Kathleen Hanna, queen of the riot grrls, formerly of Bikini Kill, now of LeTigre, in line for the bathroom by accident. Patrick's getting annoyed and he walks too fast so that we aren't next to them anymore. We pass another cluster of hate protesters and so for fun I blow kisses and do my best Miss America wave because this always seems like the appropriate response. Most of the signs here say simply that we are going to hell. Though if we really are all going to hell I hope I can sit in a separate section from the "If you're gay and you know it clap your hands" singers.

Then a man taps me on the shoulder and says he's a reporter from an Atlanta journal. He wants to know if he can ask me a few questions, and I say sure, except, I'm not from Georgia. "Why are you marching with Georgia Tech then?" he asks.

Since when did freedom become about buying a rainbow air freshener?

I explain that I am just following Tristan Taormino. He seems confused. I wonder if I am ruining the good image of the march by admitting to following someone whose nickname is Buttgirl. Then again, why boycott when you can subvert?

I finally get Patrick to slow down a little until we are standing next to Tristan's group again, and I end up talking with a woman in the entourage about fetish clothes. I wish I hadn't worn such a vanilla ensemble, but I had given up on all my looking-good plans after witnessing the fortieth couple in matching outfits. We cross back onto the green for the rally and I see some girls wearing jokey T-shirts that say "hot bi babes" and dancing around a maypole. This is a little better. There is some putting of suntan lotion on Tristan Taormino's stomach where she's also written "pervert" in lipstick. I finally say, "Um, I really liked your video." After a while I add, "Um, I really liked your book, too." That pretty much exhausts all my ideas of things to say. Also a marching band and some kind of national gay cheerleading squad is performing to the Flintstones theme song and this is making it hard to think. I wonder about the choice of music. Is it an ode to prehistoric homoeroticism? Is it because of that line, "We'll have a gay old time?"

Before I can figure anything out, it's already time to go because my special discount tickets mean I have to leave by one o'clock. It's all right though. Maybe I'd missed my chance to hear Ellen DeGeneres speak, but I was already pretty clear on what this march meant. At least from where I was standing, there wasn't much diversity. And there was definitely no sex. I didn't even see anyone with their shirt off—not even the boys! I had a much better time at last year's Boston dyke march where I got to carry a sign that said "I love muff" and scare the businessmen. I noticed later that in the Monday *New York Times* the march was covered way back on page fourteen. Maybe it was a reminder of how unwarranted (or even dangerous) all this complacency and commercialism was. Or maybe it was just proof of the fact that if you throw a rainbow colored Tupperware party, there's a very good chance it's going to get covered like one. On the brighter side though, my new pride steering wheel cover is now the envy of all my friends.

Karen Pittelman is a budding queer celebrity stalker and porn star wannabe in Cambridge, MA.

How This Girl Finally Got A Decent Abortion

By Christa Lyons

Talking about abortion rights in this country is hard. Talking about the quality of abortion service provided at clinics is a whole nuther ball o' wax. It simply isn't done. The problem isn't just that we don't want the rightwingers to manipulate such a discussion. It's that too many liberals also believe that women who need abortions should feel at least somewhat mournful about having them. We should be trying to garner sympathy with our sad tales of woe, which does not include making a ruckus about the quality of treatment at various facilities.

So, in this political climate, my essay will appear radical—and indeed it is, because it goes beyond the morality debate to discuss the wildly different levels of care I received at two Boston clinics. Yes, I've had two abortions. Admitting to more than one abortion is like carrying a sign saying, "I'm a big whore! Pelt me with rocks! Put me behind bars!" Yet, it is my hope to encourage and empower, with my own delightfully sick sense of humor, other women who might like to join me in reclaiming their abortion experiences. For this reason, the tone of this article will make no delicate bones. Kinder and gentler abortion stories are simply snooze marathons intended for knitting circles! I have not the time nor the interest to bore you! Speaking one's mind isn't easy dear hearts! With all disclaimers in place, and for the love of sweet baby Jezus, let me begin my story.

Ready?

My first "fetus killing" was tendered at a presumably reputable and well-known spot in Massachusetts. My regular gynecology health provider at the time also functioned as a full-service women's clinic. Staying put was my preference, but after price shopping through the Yellow Pages, this savvy shopper opted to switch clinics. Of course, you often get what you pay for . . . (It should be noted that my reason for not name dropping the clinics is due to the fact that my membranic purges occurred over ten years ago. Who's to say things haven't changed?)

From the moment I arrived at Price-Busters (so named for their highly competitive rate), I should have turned and run away. First off, the clinic is in the top five list for nut-ball protesters due to its high visibility in Boston. Unlike my regular gynecology facility, there weren't any escorts on hand (remember, this takes place long before John Salvi's shooting rampage at several abortion clinics). Although I had taken the advice of the secretary and scheduled my appointment on a week day to avoid "the crowds," it made no difference.

I got a ride to within sight of the clinic from the jerk who knocked me up. (At the time, I didn't deal with birth control since carrying condoms or discussing birth control made me feel slutty.) Then I walked towards the building alone as my devoted boyfriend quickly sped off in search of breakfast. The closer I got to the front door, the farther away it appeared. Perhaps this had something to do with the protesters closing in around me like something out of *Night Of The Living Dead*, as I tried to make my way into the clinic. With vitriol spewing, they lobbed plastic baby fetuses at me (complete with deformed bloody limbs and shrunken, mangled doll heads; I would love to get a hold of this toy manufacturer). I was addressed with the usual slur—"Murderer"—and unsparingly peppered with other helpful phrases like, "Be saved by God, or go to hell as a child killin' whore." All righty! Seen through their eyes, I quickly visualized myself as an insane beast who would gladly pass on ribeye steak in favor of sucking the marrow from small children's bones.

Needless to say, I reached Price-Busters' front door emotionally unhinged. When I pressed the buzzer, a blonde horror show with sparkling blue eye shadow, crusty mauve lipstick, and gargantuan hot pink acrylic nails opened the door and screamed past me at the fetus-toting Christians, "Shuttt upp!!! Shutt the fuckkk upp!!" Hmmm. Could David Lynch be filming a scene for an upcoming movie? Was the fabulous Divine, sadly no longer with us, going to appear and somehow manage to shepherd me through this experience? Such daydreams were interrupted with the spine numbing question—was this even a legal abortion clinic? As long as the blonde Thing wasn't the doctor, I promised myself I wouldn't panic.

The waiting room was filled with children's toys and teenage fashion magazines like *Seventeen* and *Mademoiselle*. Most of the young women sitting with me opted to absently play with the toys. Being near anything childlike at this point utterly revolted me. From the moment I found out I was pregnant, I couldn't get to the clinic fast enough. Of course, I knew feeling this way made me a horrible woman. So I carefully feigned delicacy and tried hard to show the emotions of a good middle-class, white female to my friends and family. "If only I could support myself and this child . . . ," I would frequently say to my mother, while silently counting down the days to my appointment.

Admitting to more than one abortion is like carrying a sign saying, "I'm a big whore! Pelt me with rocks! Put me behind bars!"

It turns out that we didn't have to stay in the toy room for very long. After the "personal interview," with a nurse who looked like she hadn't graduated from junior high, about five of us—now sporting blue smocks and socks—were herded into a cell-like room. It was like something out of *A Handmaid's Tale*. I was the last in our group to be ushered into the doctor's office. The room was surprisingly small and there wasn't a lot of medical equipment—it didn't look a bit like a hospital television show. I was curious about why this was and wanted to ask, but the doctor wasn't in a good mood; she came into the room frowning and sighing. When I reached for her shoulder just before the procedure, she subtly moved it several inches. I took the hint and kept my hands to myself. Then I started crying.

When it was over, I asked to see the bucket of tissue. I was afraid they might've missed it and I'd have to come back, do it all over again. The doctor just starred at me and barked, "What?!" I politely asked again, adding, "I just want to make sure it's out." She shook her head slightly in disbelief and said, "Don't worry, you're all set," and walked out the door. Reaching for my clothes, I started crying again. After waiting a few minutes, I got into the car with Mr. Sensitive (he ran late finishing breakfast). That night I dreamed Price-Busters missed the fetus and no matter how many abortions I had, they couldn't get rid of it. Towards the end of this nightmare, I gave birth. Only after I got my period, did this dream evaporate.

I wouldn't have gotten pregnant again, one year later, if it hadn't been for my abysmal self-esteem (I had started seeing the ex again, a true Prince-I hate condoms-Charming). Keeping condoms myself never occurred to me. You know, good girls are only allowed to have sex if they are swept away by passion. Premeditated sex, i.e. birth control, meant you not only wanted "it" but probably liked "it," too. So I chose pregnancy denial. Hey, if society clings to abortion denial, I was certainly allowed pregnancy denial.

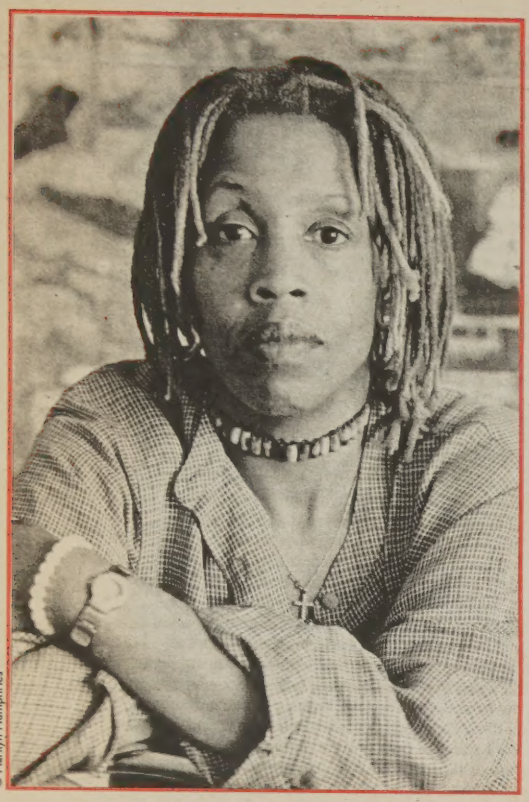
My best friend, we'll call her Janice, told me she felt like a shameful waste product after her third, but that the abortion itself was fantastic! This lesser known clinic is located in a suburb near Boston. Only slightly more expensive than Price-Busters, this pad also offered sliding scale rates for low-income women. From the moment I arrived, I felt like I'd traveled to some exotic health spa. The clinic, which I'll refer to as "Pleasure Garden," is a gigantic older house enclosed by large trees, shrubs, and manicured flower beds. Protesters aren't as familiar with it and the few who show up are kept far away from the expansive parking lot—let alone the front door! The large waiting room had a piano in the corner and book shelves at the far end. Large, leafy plants in ornate vases highlighted the beautiful rugs, wallpaper, and high ceilings. A variety of magazines were dispersed on the side tables, and hello darlings, I didn't see one child's toy. I was in abortion heaven.

The woman who interviewed me before my abortion listened to everything I had to say while holding my hand, her head tilted toward me as she nodded sympathetically. After my urine sample I took a seat in the video room and watched a tape on "How To Have Safer Sex," all the while packing my purse with free condoms from a tri-colored glass bowl. I was damn near enjoying myself when my turn to see the doctor arrived.

The same gracious lady who'd interviewed me about my predicament accompanied me through the procedure, holding my hand and telling me stories. (I don't know what she was actually saying, only that it kept my mind occupied.) The male doctor was actually kind; he explained what I'd feel and when, and believe it or not, what the procedure entailed! He explained what "dilation of the cervix" meant and everything. I was so grateful that I forgot to ask him if I could "check the bucket" afterwards. I didn't dare tell my family about my "good experience," or send the thank-you card I'd written to the nice woman who stayed at my side, but on those occasions I hear of some girl or woman in "trouble," I make sure to give Pleasure Garden a rave review.

Now that I'm older, wiser, not to mention a red hot bloody feminist—sorry! I can't resist reclaiming anti-choice metaphors—I want to talk about abortion whenever I get the opportunity. The Gay Rights phrase "Silence Equals Death" not only applies to abortion rights—goodbye, rusty hangers!—but also to the level of care we receive. Personally, I'm prayin' for the day when places like Pleasure Garden are not only the norm, but the procedure is 1) covered by all insurance agencies, and 2) granted to poor women free of charge. Of course, in an ideal world pre- and post-abortion services might include services ranging from facials, and full-body massage—a swimming pool and sauna would also be nice. Until that time, I'm a two-abortion woman with large enough ovaries to tell my story. As the gratefully childless woman I am today, I credit my abortions for helping me feel like I'm starring in *Thelma and Louise* (either character) every day of my life without having to die at the end.

Christa is an ex-Sojette, once again waiting tables to work on her diction, I mean fiction! Ms. Lyons, truth be told, misses her co-workers very much and is grateful that she's still allowed on the premises—despite her need to sing and pole dance in the production room.



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We Fought for Our Rights and We Loved Each Other

HIV outreach educator Tina Williams talks about the years she spent as a prisoner at MCI-Framingham and what we need to do now for women inside and out

By Tina Williams

Tina Williams is an outreach educator at the Multicultural AIDS Coalition of Boston. Williams spent 17 years, from 1971 to 1988, in M.C.I.-Framingham, the Massachusetts prison for women. During this time she organized with other women prisoners to advocate for their rights and improve conditions. Williams witnessed a dramatic change in prison culture during the nearly two decades she was incarcerated. These changes were caused by the flood of crack cocaine into communities of color, mandatory sentencing legislation created during the "war on drugs," and politicians' emphasis on punishment rather than rehabilitation of people in prison. Today Williams works with young women and men, encouraging them to think critically about the economic, racial, and social forces that have led to the incarceration of over two million people in the United States, a disproportionate number of them Black, Latino, and poor. Williams is also writing a book about her experiences and the criminal justice system in America.

On May 13, 2000, Tina Williams gave the keynote address at "A Call for Healing: Women in Prison, Families in Crisis—A Conference for the Community." The conference took place at the Dimock Community Health Center in Roxbury, Massachusetts, and was sponsored by the Women in Prison Families in Crisis Coordinating Committee, a coalition of organizations led by the American Friends Service Committee and Dimock Community Health Center. The coalition works with women who are in prison, at risk for prison, or in transition to the community. The following is an edited version of Williams's speech.

I suffered many kinds of abuse as a child, and by the time I was a teenager, I was caught up in street life. In 1970, in my late teenage years, I went out one night to rob someone—I didn't mean to kill the man but he died. His death was accidental. I was arrested and extradited from Chicago to Boston.

My trial was held in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I sat in the courtroom when the lawyers interviewed potential jurors. They asked the people, "If the jury found the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, would you be able to sentence the defendant to the death penalty?" I watched as people who said "no" were disqualified, and people who said "yes" were allowed to sit on the jury. I asked my lawyer, "Why did they interview about 121 people for the jury, and only one of them was Black?" (She was disqualified.) "I thought I was supposed to be judged by a jury of my peers," I said. In the end, I was found guilty of murder in the first degree and sentenced to life in prison. But the death penalty was not recommended, thank God, because it was an accidental death.

I was sentenced to M.C.I.-Framingham and placed in maximum security, a form of isolation. In 1971, prison rules included things like you couldn't wear black underwear, and you could only call five people who had been approved by a probation check. We couldn't talk during meals and every morning we were marched to the cafeteria like kids—in twos—and told where to sit. There were no Black or Latino reading materials in the library, no Black newspapers, and no educational courses other than the obligatory GED. The education department was understaffed and archaic. Mail was heavily censored, psychological services were poor, and medical treatment was bad.

As a way to congregate, discuss politics, and plan actions without the corrections officers knowing about it, we started a chess club. The chess club drew in a mixture of women—Black, white, and Latina, heterosexual, and gay. We were all reading the writings of Mao and Ché and writing radical poetry.

Before the mandatory sentencing bill passed in the 1980s [which eliminated discretion in sentencing and mandated a minimum time to be served], the prison was predominantly white—though women of color generally served longer sentences than white women. After mandatory sentencing, the racial composition of the prison changed. Black and Latina sisters started showing up in larger numbers. I hate to scapegoat him, but [the case of] Willie Horton really did it. When he was let out on a furlough he raped a woman in front of her husband. That happened when Governor Dukakis was running for President. So the Republicans used the Willie Horton case against Dukakis—they still use it as an example of what happens if the criminal justice system is "too lenient." Horton's case had a lot of ramifications for prisoners across the state. For example, it became harder for prisoners to get parole and furloughs were outlawed in 1988.

The drug culture within prison also changed while I was there. When I first went to prison, alcoholics were incarcerated at M.C.I.-Framingham because alcoholism was treated as a crime in Massachusetts. Drug addicts, mostly heroin addicts, were also serving prison sentences. When crack cocaine came along, it had a big effect on the composition of the prison population. Cocaine takes six months to a year to leave a person's system, so when people who had been using cocaine for a year or two came to Framingham, they would still act like they were high. They would run around being loud, talking fast and jittery, drinking lots of coffee. The women who came to Framingham were younger now too, and they would cause trouble—because of the effects of the drugs, not because of who they are as people.

Other things about the atmosphere changed too because of drugs. There used to be a code of honor among prisoners way back in the day. Not any more. Now women will steal your underwear out of the dryer and wear it. I know women who came to Framingham ten years ago who were in their right state of mind, and who were fine. The same women were released, started smoking crack cocaine, came back to prison and could not even spell their names. As a result of drug usage, some people experience serious mental health issues which need to be addressed while they're in prison.

The Chess Club and Radical Politics

I was radical before I went to jail, but I became more radical through reading and conversations while I was there. The whole time I was in jail, no matter what else was happening, my mind was my own and I fed it. I read the *Guardian* and other newspapers. I also corresponded with people like one of the San Quentin Six (six brothers who were down with George Jackson prior to his death). I learned a lot about history and politics from that brother. I was also a member of the Panther Party and was visited by Panther members, who made sure we had newspapers.

As a way to congregate, discuss politics, and plan actions without the corrections officers (CO's) knowing about it, we started a chess club. The chess club drew in a mixture of women—Black, white, and Latina, heterosexual and gay. We were all reading the writings of Mao and Ché, and writing radical poetry. The chess club fought for basic rights, like not being called girls, and not having to sign and carry a student pass in order to move within the institution. We wanted a law library and better educational facilities. We also organized for better medical conditions and an end to total hysterectomies.

By the '70s Attica was jumping off, Walpole was jumping off, and in Framingham we had our own riot for more rights. The majority of the prison participated. We organized a work stoppage and the prison was shut down. We invited the press and held a press conference. Mediators came in from the community. The brothers in Walpole and Norfolk were rioting as well—it was time for revolution. A lot of women were beaten up; the state police were brought in and women were transferred to other prisons across the country. But in

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Love & Basketball

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Noelia Ortiz Cortés and Abe Rybeck

More Offensive Theater

Immaculate Infection: Living with AIDS at the Intersection of Latino/a and Gay Communities

Five Bottles in a Six Pack: A Tragicomedy about Multiple Personalities and Racism

By Kristina Aikens

This June, the lesbian and gay Theater Offensive will once again be breaking new ground as Boston theater artists Renita Martin and Brenda Cotto-Escalera bring their most recent works to the stage. In *Five Bottles in a Six Pack*, Martin explores the humor and pathos of one woman's journey through a mental health crisis. Cotto-Escalera will direct *Immaculate Infection*, a portrait of two very different people who grow close while helping each other cope while living with AIDS. *Immaculate Infection* was created by Cotto-Escalera along with Theater Offensive artistic director Abe Rybeck and actress/puppeteer Noelia Ortiz Cortés. Both Martin and Cotto-Escalera took time from their busy schedules to talk to *Sojourner* about art, health, politics, and the Boston theater scene.

Brenda Cotto-Escalera—*Immaculate Infection*

Brenda Cotto-Escalera is a Puertorriqueña theater artist whose work focuses on the development of new performance through collective creation and actor-centered research and improvisation. She also works with Popular Theater techniques in a variety of grass-roots community organizations. Her latest works include *Motherlands*, which won the Boston Women's Fund Take a Stand Award in 1998, and *Pájaro Boricua*, which has been presented in Puerto Rico, Texas, Maine, Connecticut, and Boston. Cotto-Escalera teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she has developed courses on Contemporary Latin American Theater, Theater and Cultural Diversity in the United States, and Gender and Performance. She also teaches introductory classes on theater arts and studio courses on collective creation and actor-created theater. She is one of the co-directors of The Usual Suspects, The Theater Offensive's Repertory Company.

How did you get involved in theater?

Through popular education using theater as a tool. I worked in Puerto Rico with a woman named Rosa Luisa Marquez, and when I was in college she was doing a project at a low-income housing project. The people who lived there were going to be relocated and the building torn down; it was a community that had a lot of history in it, and a lot of artists were coming in trying to recapture the history before people had to move out. We worked with kids doing theater and music and having them paint murals.

Do you think of yourself as a political artist?

That's not my primary approach to theater; it's theater as a tool for education. It's based on the model that knowledge is power. A lot of the theater that I do follows *Theatre of the Oppressed* by Augusto Boal, which was built on *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire. It's giving popular classes a voice, a place to rehearse for life and incite social change.

Where did the idea for Immaculate Infection come from?

That came from Abe Rybeck. He always wanted to explore AIDS in a way that was different from the ways it had been explored before. There have been a lot of plays written from an Anglo male perspective that are personal journeys of suffering and people losing people to AIDS, and are very individual. These are important for talking about the disease, but right now there are also a lot of social ramifications of the disease. Right now it's affecting mostly women and youth, and most of all, women and youth of color. We wanted to look at how AIDS gets tangled up in issues of religion and morality, which prevent safe sex from being effective. There's a lot of layers of culture that suddenly stop things that are as simple as putting on a condom. We wanted to look also at the intersection of the experience of gay men and Latina women in terms of the disease, how things are different but what they can learn from each other in the struggle for survival.

How long have you worked on it?

We started in May 1999. We worked for about a month and met with people from the Boston Living Center [support program for people with HIV/AIDS in Boston] and people at Casa Iris, which is a Latino support organization for people with AIDS. We started learning from the incredible life experience of the people in these organizations. At Casa Iris, every meeting was a party, a celebration of life, and there was food and laughter and music. So we got surrounded by that. From those meetings we created a first structure that was about 40 minutes long, and was presented as part of the Plays At Work series at the Theater Offensive. Then that summer we were invited to a play lab at New World Theater in Amherst, a program called "New Works for a New World." In that program, we worked intensely for two weeks polishing and creating new scenes. We worked with an incredible lighting designer who helped us create visceral and concrete images of the issues we had in mind.

Also in the Amherst area we worked in the community, so we did workshops at a Latino youth organization, at a halfway house for men who had been incarcerated, and at the AIDS education section of the Spanish-American Union in Springfield. We've been rehearsing for our opening on June 8.

The work was created by you and the cast. Can you talk about that process?

I've worked a long time in collective theater, in a theater where I as a director and a writer become more than anything an editor. So the actors are creating material through improvisation. I provoke them with a song or an image or a challenge or conflict in terms of the dramaturgy, the dramatic structure of the piece, and they give improvisations which I edit and form into the piece. We did something similar in this case but added an extra element. We incorporated some of the community material from improvisation workshops with Latino women and youth living with AIDS at Casa Iris and The Boston Living Center.

Our work is not linear; we are not trying to create a story with a beginning, middle, and end. It's an interaction between these two characters. We see after this interaction fragments of their life together, how they imagine each other, their life outside of the relationship, and it's based on images, movement, sequences that don't necessarily have text. We use popular music as a bridge to our audiences—we can communicate by using the music people love.

Will there be a written script?

Yes. But there is a challenge to create a written text as we go along; it's a script that has sections that look like poems, small sections of dialogue that look like a traditional play, and a lot of descriptions of almost choreography, of movement sequences.

Do you plan to continue touring to community centers?

We want to continue showing the work at professional theater venues, but always with a connection to community centers. The whole idea is that our work as professional artists feeds popular theater art, with people who are not necessarily actors. When we present the work at the Boston Center for the Arts, people from Casa Iris will be there and we'll use the opportunity to do outreach. We're inviting people to walk in the AIDS Walk together with Casa Iris so that

Continued on next page

Play Dates

Immaculate Infection, created by Brenda Cotto-Escalera, Noelia Ortiz Cortés, and Abe Rybeck, directed by Brenda Cotto-Escalera, and performed by Abe Rybeck and Noelia Ortiz Cortes, will be performed June 8-24 at the Black Box Theater, Boston Center for the Arts.

Five Bottles in Six Pack, created and performed by Renita Martin and directed by Daniel Alexander Jones, will be performed June 9-24 at the Black Box Theater.

Continued from previous page

we continue this connection.

Right after the presentation here we'll travel to Peru, to present it at a Theater for Human Rights festival, where the focus is the right to health and the AIDS crisis in Latin American countries, and how the right to health is denied to many people. In that context, the play becomes very political. And there we're doing it together with the AIDS Action community and different community groups. In February we might travel to Costa Rica to do something very similar, working with the AIDS organizations there. We also plan to tour here in the United States, but always creating this residency where the play comes accompanied by outreach workshops and talk-back sessions right after the show, where we focus on the issues we've been discussing.

How did you get involved with a tour to Peru?

We're presenting the work at a theater and human rights festival called "Teatro por La Vida," Theater for Life. It's a festival organized by the Association for Human Rights, an international organization. There will be groups from Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, Colombia, and provinces in Peru. It's happening in Lima in the last week of June. I do a lot of work in Latin America and have traveled in Peru, Colombia, Puerto Rico, and we have a network of people who keep each other informed.

I know that Noelia Ortiz Cortes is an experienced puppeteer; is there puppetry in the piece?

There's no traditional puppetry. But we use elements like large pieces of plastic to create an image of an environment of sterility that people living with AIDS are made to exist in by some institutions. But that plastic—Noelia takes it and makes it into a baby and she manipulates it in many different ways. It's not a puppet, but suddenly the objects in the space take on a life of their own due to her skills as a puppeteer. Noelia does a lot of physical work and puppetry, and is very silent—and Abe Rybeck does cabaret singing, satire, lots of words. So we've been using the abilities of each of the actors.

Do you ever direct work that you didn't create with a cast?

Very seldom. I've been hired a few times to direct plays in university settings. I teach theater at MIT and I've directed the students a couple of times. But it's not as interesting to me.

What do you like best about creating your own work?

Because I am a Latina and I'm a lesbian the canon of theatrical work that's out there very seldom represents me. So I have to represent myself and create new pieces. What's most interesting about creating pieces myself is that suddenly stories get combined. So it's not me doing my story; we're doing a story about being Jewish and being Latina and the intersection of that, because that's who the cast is, and suddenly our experiences complement and support one another. If you were going to look out there for a play about someone Jewish and someone Latina at an AIDS clinic, you're going to be very [hard] pressed to find something.

Is there anything you don't like about the process you use?

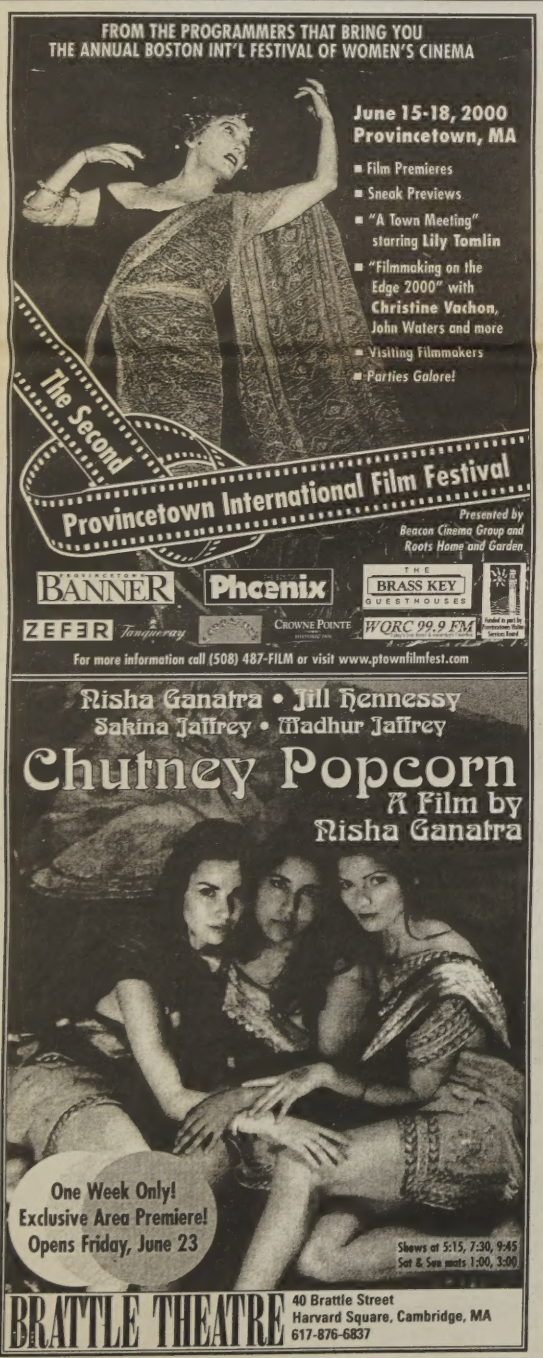
The biggest challenge is time. Creating the pieces takes a lot of time and rehearsal space. It's usually funding that's a challenge, funding a project that takes over a year. How do you keep the actors fed and find the space to do it? People want products. We are pressed to yield products sometimes before we are ready.

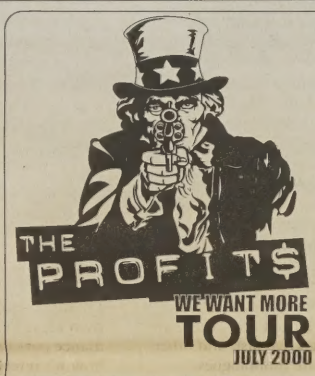
You as the director write the grants?

This time I've had a lot of support from the Theater Offensive. In the past I've written the grants, but Abe has written some, and the Theater Offensive has a grant writer who's finding opportunities.

What is your hope for your audience?

Our audiences are very diverse. The Theater Offensive has a mostly gay and





JULY 7. **New York, NY** Night&Gails
JULY 8. **York, PA** The Zodiac
JULY 9. **Pittsburgh, PA** Mr. Roboto's w/ DS 13
JULY 11. **Pittsburgh, PA** The M.I.T
JULY 12. **Columbus, OH** Bernies w/ The Creeps
JULY 13. **Cincinnati, OH** The Void w/ The Tweerps
JULY 14. **Indianapolis, IN** Robapaloza
JULY 15. **St. Louis, MI** The Creepy Crawl
JULY 16. **Chicago, IL** The Fireside Bowl w/ Mary Taylor Morphine
JULY 17. **Chicago, IL** benefit show t.b.a.
JULY 18. **Grand Rapids, MI** Working Youth Collective
JULY 19. **Detroit, MI** Trumbell Theater
JULY 20. **Cleveland, OH** The Blind Lemon
JULY 21. **Washington, D.C.** Kaffa House
JULY 22. **New York, NY** A.B.C. No Rio w/The Skabs
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Sojourner The Women's Forum

lesbian audience that is somewhat diverse, but sometimes somewhat isolated. We hope when we do a play like this where there's an intersection of two cultures that don't mix too much that people learn what cultures have in common. As characters create bridges toward one another, communities that are our audience can do the same. When we work with Latina women and they come see the play, it's a play about empowerment. It's a play about how people who survive AIDS are people who take their health into their own hands and don't let the system guide them. It's a message of understanding. It's also a simple story of human relationships so the ultimate thing is that we'd like people to enjoy it.

What do you think of the Boston theater scene?

I teach at MIT classes on Latin American Theater and Theater and Ethnic Diversity in the United States, and I usually try to get my students to see different plays. I'm usually scrounging. There's very little Latino theater in Boston. We usually get pieces by August Wilson and some Asian American pieces at the Huntington. But it's very few and far between. The theater in Boston doesn't reflect the diversity of the people who live in Boston. It's limited in many ways, and very traditional.

Why do you think that is?

It's difficult to do theater in the city—it's expensive. The biggest challenge is real estate, rehearsal spaces are ungodly expensive. Performance spaces even more. So companies that have existed for a long time and have control of their spaces can do theater; companies that are new and have to hunt for spaces in the city disappear because paying for space drains their budgets.

RENITA MARTIN—*FIVE BOTTLES IN A SIX PACK*

Playwright and performer Renita Martin has been called "one of Boston's most talented playwrights" by the *Boston Herald*. Excerpts from her comic-tragic one-woman show *Five Bottles in a Six Pack* will be published in *Dykes With Baggage* in October. Her work has most recently appeared in *Ma Ka': Diasporic Jukes* and *Does Your Mama Know?* Her plays *Peace in the Midst, Frisco's Cafe,* and *Lo She Comes* have been produced both in Boston and nationally. Martin is an Annette B. Miller fellow and recipient of the Herbert and Nancy Beigel New Play Award at Brandeis University. She teaches at Emerson College and is the founder and director of Rhythm Visions Production Company, a nonprofit devoted to teaching and producing artists of color.

How did you get involved in theater?

I think from as early as I can remember I was always doing theater and interested in the theatrical elements of what was going on around me. There was a juke joint down the street where you could hear people having fun or arguing and I used to go in my house and act out what I'd heard. Or I'd go to church—especially funerals where people would cry and stuff—and we'd come home and act it out. Right now I'm in the master's playwriting program at Brandeis. My undergrad was a combination of African and African American history and theater.

How did you get involved with the Theater Offensive?

I've been working with them the last six or eight years, doing workshops. I haven't had anything produced by them before now, so I'm excited about working with them in this way.

How did you get the idea for Five Bottles in a Six Pack?

I just started writing some comedy pieces as journal entries, but I hadn't really thought about them going anywhere. Tina D'Elia, an artist who used to live in Boston and lives in Los Angeles now, said, "You have to put this into something." That's when I started thinking of the pieces as a production. I started writing them more as therapy initially. The piece deals with multiple personality or dissociative identity disorder.

What is the structure of the piece?

It's a bunch of monologues and there will be music in it. Some traditional gospel and some original music, mostly provided by the director, Daniel Alexander Jones. We do a lot of improv and Daniel just starts singing. There are five main characters who are all part of one person.

Do the characters relate to each other? Do they know the other ones exist?

I don't think anyone's ever asked that before. Yeah. There's one character who's a Shakespearean actress who is, in her mind, above the other characters. She has problems with a bunch of the characters, and they have a lot of problems with her. Sometimes I'm one character one second and another character a few seconds later, and the characters are talking to each other. There's this whole scene before the main character gets put in a mental hospital where they're all going on and one of the characters says, "We gotta cut this shit out before we get locked up." There are times where they go real fast, and other times when there are monologues.

What kinds of reactions have you gotten to the piece? Have you experienced any prejudice about mental health issues?

For the most part I've had people who have come to me and said, "Thank you for coming out about this," or "You've helped me be able to be more vocal about my depression." My friends and family get concerned—and it's a legitimate concern—that if this is public knowledge it will influence the way people think about me and whether or not they think I can do quality work or stick with commitments or whatever. I haven't had that happen. Or at least I don't know that it's happened. Somebody might have said, "Oh, let's not call her, she's crazy."

Was that something that you had to overcome, or was it just other people's concern?

To a certain extent I've had to overcome. Before I was diagnosed in 1996, I didn't know what was wrong with me. Then it was like a big secret and there was all this pressure to contain it. I think that I felt a relief since I've been dealing with it in my work.

Do you feel that most of your work is personal?

Yes, but this one is the most personal. A lot of my work is, I don't know if it's autobiographical, but it's close to me in a sort of abstract way. This is the first experience with something that's so close.

Have you ever had any problems with people you knew who didn't like what you said in one of your pieces?

Yes, but if people have had problems, it's always led to a discussion. It never feels like a door has been closed. I did a piece as Jesus as a drag queen and that got a lot of people heated and one of those people was a very close friend. But instead of closing that space for us—there's a touchy spiritual space between us—we've been able to talk about it because she saw that piece.

Do you consider yourself to be a political artist?

When I think of myself, I just think "artist." But in the context of this society, there's no way to be "just" anything without any political consequence. Everything contributes to what is or is not happening politically. An artist in particular is so vocal and so much stuff comes out. Even not commenting on something is sometimes a comment.

Is your process as an actress different when you're working on your own writing as opposed to acting in someone else's play?

It's much harder to work on my own stuff. It's hard to look at it as an actor and not continue to edit, to not judge the writing. The actor's job is to love the character, love the script, love the language. As a writer, I'm constantly critical of the work. When the two clash, it can be kinda crazy.

How do you work with a director on your own piece?

Basically the director just tells me what to do (laughs). I bring in ideas but I'm more reserved about bringing in my own ideas to the directorial/performance part because I'm interested in how it's interpreted. I worked with Daniel last summer too; he's been really great on both the developmental and the performance aspect. He made suggestions about what flowed and what didn't and helped make sure that Renita the writer and Daniel the director were on the same page as far as intent was concerned. He helped work on it on a dramaturgical level.

So the piece has been staged before?

Yes, at the Solo Stage Boston festival last summer at the BCA. And I did one performance at Brandeis.

What's the best thing about creating your own work?

Being able to make a space for myself and other talented people who don't get a chance to perform roles that speak to them on an intimate level.

What do you like least about it?

The most frustrating thing is the hustle you have to do in addition to writing, in addition to the artistic part. Having to constantly sell yourself. I'm not necessarily good at those things, those schmoozing kinds of things or the more aggressive business aspect of it.

Does your work have any influences?

Toni Morrison is a big influence. And people at home, just everyday people like my grandmother, her love for education. I think Shakespeare inspires me, not only the work but also the history of the community theater, just being able to constantly work, to be workshopping. I don't know if they called it workshopping (laughs). Eudora Welty—I think she's brilliant as a literary artist, but she's also done interesting photographs. And her love for Mississippi and her connection to history inspires me, and her face.

Renita Martin

What do you hope your audience will take away from the performance?

I hope it shows that the lines that we tend to draw to separate us from other people—whatever those lines are about, whether it's "this person's crazy so I'm on this side of the line," or "that person's queer so I'm on this side of the line"—aren't so thick and rigid. I want the piece to connect the relationship between poverty and racism and sexism, but to not talk about them as "isms," but as actuality. Those things are violent. People want to separate black men killing other black men or teenagers being "bad" from political and social decisions that serve to perpetuate those things, like poverty, keeping poor people poor. There's also a lot of room for people to use laughter in a lot of different ways—there's the laughter that indicts, but there's also the laughter that is healing, and there's the familiar laughter and the laughter that makes you look at yourself and how funny and ridiculous we can be.

What are your thoughts on the Boston theater scene?

That's complicated. I'm really excited about what's happening. The Huntington is doing August Wilson. Commonwealth Shakespeare Company is doing *The Tempest* and they try to do a lot of casting with people of color and there's film stuff going on with people of color. But what's been an ongoing concern for me is that the inclusion should be an inherent thing. Actors of color should have access to "traditional" theater. I'm still waiting to see a true color-blind or color-aware casting. I'm excited and I'm hopeful that there'll be more inclusion, that I won't have to wait for an August Wilson play to see black people on stage. I think there's a lot of new and exciting talent out there, and the people who have been working for years are still working, so it's an exciting time.

Kristina Aikens's writing has appeared in **Sojourner, artisan, Slugfest, poetpourri,** *and* **angstgrrl.com** *and on WMFO's "Words and Music."*

The Second P-town International Film Fest

From Aimee and Jaguar

Don't miss this excellent selection of over 40 premieres, rediscoveries, and sneak previews in the second annual Provincetown, Massachusetts, festival. The following is a selected list of playdates, showtimes, and brief descriptions of films. (See pp. 30 for complete listing.) Catalogues will be available May 26, 2000. Advance tickets are available through Emerson MajesTix and Box Office Express. Screenings take place at The New Art Cinema 1 & 2 (NAC), The Crown & Anchor, The Schoolhouse Center, Town Hall, & Vixen.

Thursday, June 15

NAC 2, ***Just One Time*** at 5:30pm

Bedrooms and Hallways meets *Desperately Seeking Susan* in this playful and sexy romantic comedy that is both a pansexual taboo-smasher and a winning love story. Before a young couple gets married, they dive into some previously unexplored sexual fantasies. A heartfelt and hilarious plea for love and understanding. (USA, 1999, 93 min) dir Lane Junger w/Joelle Carter, Guillermo Diaz, Jennifer Esposito, Lane Janger.

But I'm A Cheerleader at 10:00pm

When Megan's parents suspect lesbian tendencies from their teenage daughter, they waste no time shipping her off to a "straightening out" rehabilitation camp run by the hysterical Cathy Moriarty. An all-star cast includes Natasha Lyonne (*The Slums of Beverly Hills*), RuPaul, Clea DuVall (*Girl, Interrupted*), and Mink Stole in this outrageous comedy. (USA, 1999, 90 min) dir Jamie Babbit w/Natasha Lyonne, Clea DuVall, Cathy Moriarty, Bud Cort, Mink Stole, RuPaul Charles, Julie Delpy.

Vixen, ***Any Way She Likes It*** at 8:00pm

An assortment of sexy lesbian shorts kicks off the Vixen screenings.

Friday, June 16

NAC 1, ***Chutney Popcorn*** at 7:30pm

When a 20-something Indian American woman discovers her married sister can't have children, she decides to have her baby for her—much to her own girlfriend's and her traditional mother's surprise. A delightful comedy. (USA, 1999, 92 min) dir Nisha Ganatra w/Ganatra, Jill Hennessy, Madhur Jaffrey.

First Person Plural at 7:00pm

An absorbing personal documentary about the complexity of identity, featuring an adopted woman who learns the truth about her past. (USA/Korea, 2000, 58 min) dir Deann Borshay Liem.

Long Night's Journey Into Day at 8:30pm

Award-winning filmmakers Francis Reid and Deborah Hoffman bring us the mesmerizing stories of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. (USA/South Africa, 1999, 95 min) dirs Frances Reid and Deborah Hoffman.

Vixen, ***Shadow Boxers*** at 5:30pm

A snazzy and stylish look at the new world of women's boxing. (USA, 1999, 72 min) dir Katya Bankowsky w/Lucia Rijker.

Saturday, June 17

NAC 1, ***Sunshine*** at 7:00pm

The entire 20th century is the backdrop for this elegantly told, deeply moving epic account of the fortunes of a Jewish family as its members try to survive in a world undergoing massive changes. (Hungary/Germany/Austria/Canada, 1999, 179 min) dir Istvan Szabo w/Ralph Fiennes, Rosemary Harris, Rachel Weisz, William Hurt.

NAC 2, ***Aimee and Jaguar*** at 8:00pm

Based on the astounding true story of an extraordinary love between a Jewish woman and the wife of a Nazi officer, this fiery dramatic film has taken international audiences by storm ever since it opened the Berlin Film Festival in 1999. (Germany, 1999, 125 min) dir Max Farberbock w/Maria Schrader, Juliane Kohler.

Schoolhouse, **New Works by Tracy Moffat** at 2:00pm

Artist, *Up in the Sky*, and *Heaven* make an excellent introduction to the work of Tracy Moffat—Aboriginal Australian filmmaker and photographer extraordinaire. (Australia, 70min).

Vixen, ***Reno Finds Her Mom**** at 3:00pm

Comedian/performance artist Reno searches to find the mother who put her up for adoption. It is a once-in-a-lifetime journey. Executive produced by Lily Tomlin and Jane Wagner. (USA, 1997, 90 min) dir Lydia Dean Pilcher w/Reno, Mary Tyler Moore. *Please check catalog to confirm.

Live Nude Girls Unite at 7:30pm

The inspiring saga of the exotic dancers at San Francisco's Lusty Lady, who rally around the unjust firing of a coworker and decide to unionize. Filmmaker Julia Query, one of the dancers, must now come out to her mother about her chosen occupation. (USA, 2000, 90 min) dir Julia Query.

Sunday, June 18

NAC 1, ***Paragraph 175*** at 5:30pm

From the team that created *The Celluloid Closet*, *Paragraph 175* interviews the few surviving homosexuals who endured unspeakable horrors under the Nazi regime. Through the testimonies of these men and woman, an untold chapter of the Holocaust unfolds. (USA, 1999, 81 min) dirs Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman; Narrated by Rupert Everett.

Schoolhouse, ***Bad Hair Day*** at 1:30pm

The moving, insightful, and often inspirational parting gift of Laurel Brooke, a 54-year-old woman with breast cancer. Written, produced, and directed in Provincetown during her last summer of 1999, Laurel's wish for this video was simple—that women with breast cancer and their loved ones could gain strength from her struggle. (USA, 2000, 15 min) dir Christianne Abrescu w/Laurel Brooke.

Plays With ***Living With Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100*** at 4:00pm

Born July 23, 1899, Ruth Ellis is the oldest "out" African American lesbian known. This documentary offers a rare opportunity to experience a century of our history as lived by an inspiring woman. (USA, 1999, 60 min) dir Yvonne Welbon w/Ruth Ellis.

Special Events:

Friday, June 16, Filmmaking on the Edge 2000—A Filmmaker Symposium, 6:00pm at Town Hall

Moderated by Ruby Rich; Featuring Miguel Arteta (*Star Maps*, *Chuck and Buck*), Mary Harron (*American Psycho*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*), Kimberly Peirce (*Boys Don't Cry*), Guinevere Turner (*Go Fish*, *American Psycho*), Christine Vachon (*Boys Don't Cry*, *Kids*, *Happiness*), John Waters (*Pink Flamingos*, *Cecil B. Demented*) and more! This panel will talk about how to break the Hollywood mold and produce work that challenges traditional notions of storytelling, character development, and cinematic aesthetics.

The symposium will be directly followed by the presentation of the second "Filmmaker on the Edge Award" honoring innovation in filmmaking style and storytelling to producer Christine Vachon (*Boys Don't Cry*, *Kids*, *Happiness*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*).

Saturday, June 17, "A Town Meeting," Starring Lily Tomlin, 6:00pm at Town Hall

Here's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to join a town meeting at Provincetown's Town Hall presided over by special guest of honor and first recipient of "The Lily Award"—Lily Tomlin! This award will be presented annually for courage and commitment to the art of entertainment.

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Love and Basketball: She Got Game. . . And a Whole Lotta Heartache

By Kathi Maio

Gina Prince-Bythewood's debut feature, *Love and Basketball*, had producer Spike Lee and his successful production company, 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks, behind it. That alone was enough to make me suspicious.

Don't get me wrong; I recognize Spike Lee as a skilled and highly significant American filmmaker and a trailblazer of modern African American cinema. But I recognize, too, the recurring misogyny of his work—never more so than in his own recent hoop dreams feature, *He Got Game* (1998). In that film, a poor high school b-ball star named Jesus (Ray Allen) lives out a high-pressure week in which he reluctantly reconnects with his long-lost father (Denzel Washington) while making "the most important decision of [his] life." (That is, where to play college ball).

While he struggles with his future plans, Jesus and his dad are surrounded by women. And they are all, one way or the other, depicted as "'ho's."

At best, the women of *He Got Game* are—like Milla Jovovich's character, Dakota—literal prostitutes, sexual receptacles to be used, abused, and openly traded. At worst, they are—like Jesus's girlfriend, LaLa (Rosario Dawson)—more figurative whores, who use their "love" to ensnare, manipulate, and separate a man from his honor and cold, hard cash. Heck, even Jesus's prepubescent sister seems oblivious to everything but what her brother's fame and fortune will do for her.

The only exception is Jesus's sainted, dead mama, played by Lonette McKee. And her flashback appearances exemplify a completely different chronic Spikeism. To wit, that a good female is a doomed female. (For another prime example, see Alfre Woodard's mama character in *Crooklyn*.)

No, Spike Lee is no friend to womankind.

Understandably, then, I was wary of any woman-written/directed sports feature that Mr. Lee would put his clout behind. But, after seeing the wide spectrum of largely positive female images in *Love and Basketball*, it becomes apparent that Spike Lee, his producing partner, Sam Kitt, and the executives of New Line Cinema just stood back and let Gina Prince-Bythewood make her own movie. If that movie turns out to be too predictably "romantic" for its own good, it nonetheless possesses a womanist vibe well worth seeking out.

Spanning more than a decade, *Love and Basketball* opens in 1981, when the Wright family moves into the prosperous L.A. neighborhood of Baldwin Hills. With her hair tucked into her cap, eleven-year-old Monica (Kyla Platt) is, at first, welcomed onto the local court. But her new next-door neighbor, Quincy (Glenndon Chatman), also eleven, is nonplussed when he realizes that he is playing with a girl. And he is incensed when he realizes how very good she is. (This earns Monica a brutal block that leaves a lifetime scar on her face.)

Still, the attraction is there from the start. The two even go steady—for all of three minutes—until Q. realizes that, even off the court, Monica is a defiantly independent young woman.

Flash forward to their senior year in high school. Quincy (now played by Omar Epps) has come to accept Monica (Sanaa Lathan) as a friend. He treats her, in fact, like the brother he never had.

Monica, however, feels quite differently about him. Like most of the other girls of Crenshaw High, Monica has a crush on the brightest star of the boy's basketball team, even as she makes a name for herself on the under-appreciated girl's team.

It looks like a straight path to super-stardom for Q., born the son of NBA player Zeke McCall (Dennis Haysbert). The struggle for recognition is much harder for Monica. Her homemaker mom, Camille (Alfre Woodard), actually disapproves of her fierce athleticism and total lack of demure femininity. And, much to Monica's dismay, her male coach seems to share much the same attitude.

Although an aggressive competitive spirit is admired in Quincy and his compatriots, when Monica shows the same determination to win, it's called "bad attitude." She never uses the word sexism, but Monica knows that she is being held to an impossible double-standard. She's none too pleased about it, either. "'Cause I'm a female, I get told to calm down and act like a lady," she scoffs. She knows that this is counter-productive advice for someone driven to be the best ball player ever.

Prince-Bythewood, herself a high-school and college athlete, expresses these frustrations very well—with a big assist from the star-making performance by Lathan. *Love and Basketball* is, I'd have to say, one of the best female jock flicks I've ever seen. Unfortunately, it's not *just* about a woman's champion spirit. It is also, as the title indicates, a love story. And societal attitudes about women in love are even more screwed up than our expectations of women athletes.

In standard teen dramedy style, Quincy ignores the romantic possibilities that Monica represents until the night of the big spring dance. Dolled up by her mother and older sister in a clinging white dress, full make-up, and a darling new do, a light bulb goes off over Quincy's dim head when he finally realizes just how beautiful the girl-next-door really is. Romance blossoms immediately thereafter.

By the time the two go off to study and play hoops at USC, they seem destined for happily-ever-after one-on-ones. (As evidenced by a hot game of strip basketball we get to see.) But there's always got to be a break-up crisis in a Hollywood love story. And first-time helmer Prince-Bythewood regrettably decides that she should follow the standard formula. So Quincy, anguished by his father's marital betrayal of his mother, Nona (Debbi Morgan), dutifully and precipitously breaks up with Monica. Why? According to the movie, because she refused to violate her curfew before a big game so that she could "be there for" her hurting man.

As a committed athlete, Q., more than anyone, would appreciate Monica's dedication to her basketball career. And, if he didn't? Well, good riddance. Slam dunk him right out of your heart, Mon.

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Q. (l) and Monica

Now, I believe that a young man like Quincy would be peeved to learn that his girlfriend's life doesn't *completely* revolve around his needs. But with a woman like Monica, surely Quincy would have gotten a hint of this fact prior to his current hissy fit. Would he actually dump his childhood sweetheart, and the one woman he says he knows "is for real," on a spiteful whim? I didn't buy it. As a committed athlete, Q., more than anyone, would appreciate Monica's dedication to her basketball career. And, if he didn't? Well, good riddance. Slam dunk him right out of your heart, Mon. Be the star you are. Then, get a new lover who appreciates you.

I wish! Instead, Prince-Bythewood, who has written for television shows like "A Different World" and "Felicity," couldn't help but finish off the old cliché of "girl loses boy" with "girl gets boy back again"—even though her reconciliation scene constitutes a real sell-out of her semi-autobiographical hero.

Five years pass. It is now 1993. Quincy has "moved on." (With a vengeance: he is now engaged to a flight attendant played by supermodel Tyra Banks!) But although Monica has become a basketball superstar in Spain, she has (it appears) never taken another lover, or stopped pining after Q. Without her man, even the sport she so loves has lost all meaning. She gives up her lucrative career and returns home to California to make a final play for her first and only love.

This she does in a scene that rather pointedly mixes love and basketball. Lathan and Epps do a near miraculous job of bringing depth and nuance to the scene. Their obvious chemistry almost makes it work, too. But nothing can hide the fact that Monica is humiliating herself by all but begging her arrogant ex to take her back.

While I watched this excruciating scene at a local theater, I was happy to hear several young women behind me hoot and holler their disapproval. They chided Monica not to do it. They didn't want our hero to debase herself for "love," and neither did I. *Unfortunately, Monica didn't listen* to any of us.

There is a coda at the very end of *Love and Basketball* that is designed to take the sting out of the previous scene. It is a moment of personal and professional triumph for Monica, and it is great to watch. But if we believe what came before in this film, then this "having it all" finale seems like an unlikely scenario. (What makes Quincy decide to support his woman at long last? Having her grovel for his affection? I don't think so.)

I know that I'm being tough on *Love and Basketball*. But, like Monica's harsh USC coach (Christine Dunford), who constantly gets on her frosh player's case, I am critical of the film only because I fully recognize its untapped potential. If it had avoided all the dog-eared (and damaging) clichés of the cheap romantic flick, and instead forged a new way at looking at a committed relationship between two athletes, it could have been such a great movie! Or, better yet, Prince-Bythewood could have ignored romance altogether, and just written a groundbreaking movie about a woman athlete and her long, arduous, ultimately victorious journey to the WNBA.

Maybe someday. (Probably the same day Cynthia Cooper is crowned Queen of the World!) For now, it's worth enjoying *Love and Basketball* for what it is: a movie that honors the determination and skill of the woman athlete. And, if you're like me, you will also enjoy *Love and Basketball* for what it's not: it's not Spike Lee's misogyny-fest, *He Got Game*.

Kathi Maio wishes Boston had a WNBA team.

Disciplining Bodies

Anne Fausto-Sterling's engrossing, accessible work on the politics of the construction of sexuality

Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality

By Anne Fausto-Sterling
Basic Books, 2000, $35.00

Reviewed by Banu Subramaniam

When you pick up Anne Fausto-Sterling's latest book, *Sexing the Body*, you are first struck by the stunning jacket cover. The cover presents a photograph of a human body from just above the navel to mid-thigh—the exact region that marks our obsessions with the definition of human sex. Two arms enter the photograph at the side, approaching each other and joining together between the legs to cover the anatomy that lies underneath. Lightly etched on the cover, mid-torso, are the faintly written letters X and Y, representing the two chromosomes that allegedly determine our sex. When I first saw the cover, my immediate impulse was to "read" the body. It was exquisitely sculpted with a beautiful navel, a flat stomach, elegant and long hands. There was very little hair on any of the parts. A woman, I thought. Or was it a man? I caught myself, a bit ashamed but struck by my powerful impulse to label the body.

Sexing the Body is a beautifully written, highly accessible, informative, insightful, and thought-provoking book about the politics that shape our constructions of and obsessions with sexuality. Author Anne Fausto-Sterling has been an important voice in feminist science studies over the last two decades. As a developmental biologist, feminist, and historian of science, she is remarkably adept at weaving together her love of the laboratory—her passion for experimentation and for unlocking the mysteries of nature—with feminist politics. Her first book, *Myths of Gender*, is now a classic and an important resource for those of us who teach the intersections of gender, race, and science. *Sexing the Body* has all the hallmarks of following in the same footsteps.

Making accessible complex scientific and cultural theory, without simplifying the ideas, Fausto-Sterling has succeeded in producing a book for everyone.

One of the book's major claims is that our very naming of "men" and "women" is ultimately a social decision. "We may use scientific knowledge to help us make the decision, but only our beliefs about gender—not science—can define our sex. Furthermore, our beliefs about gender affect what kind of knowledge scientists produce about sex in the first place." The dual process of science defining and shaping the "norm" of sex/gender and heterosexuality—while the "norm" renaturalizes scientific definitions of sex, gender, and sexuality—proves to be a potent tool in the regulation of bodies. This book highlights and documents the active construction of scientific and cultural facts, helping to explain how and why we are left with seemingly "natural" and uncontested facts about human biology.

I use the term "Disciplining Bodies" as the title for this review to highlight two sets of processes Fausto-Sterling underscores. First, she argues that our bodies are literally disciplined into two possible options—male and female. Using recent work on intersexuality, she documents how bodies that do not fall into the narrow binary definitions of male and female (approximately 1.7 percent of all births) are surgically altered to become "normal." While physicians and parents might largely be driven by genuinely humanitarian concerns to allow children to fit in, Fausto-Sterling powerfully describes the cost of such conversions. "Fixing" intersexuality is a long and complicated process. A male-assigned child, for example, may have to undergo as many as three operations in the first couple of years of life, and even more after puberty. A female-assigned child is reconstructed by various surgical procedures such as clitorectomy, clitoral reduction, and clitoral recession.

Fausto-Sterling describes how traumatic these surgeries and treatments are both physically and psychologically, especially because information is often rationed to the child undergoing the procedures. She argues that prenatal intervention using hormones and repeated drastic surgical treatments after birth to well past puberty cannot be the only response to naturally occurring variation in chromosomes, genitals, and secondary sexual characteristics. Must we discipline the body each time to conform to our love of binaries? Fausto-Sterling reminds us that variation and a sexual continuum are "natural," not the imposed binary male/female model.

Second, Fausto-Sterling explores the academic disciplines of history, embryology, endocrinology, surgery, psychology, and biochemistry that have "encouraged physicians to attempt to control the very gender of the body." Scientific studies and medical research have long played a crucial role in reducing the complexities of human culture and behavior to a string of nucleotides on a strand of DNA. Genetic or biological determinism, which returns cyclically to assume cultural prominence, is given the power to explain our bodies and cultures. Today, television, newspapers, and magazines inundate us with ever-growing lists of behaviors and illnesses that are "genetic." We hear of genes that "cause" homosexuality, thrill seeking, religiosity, high or low IQs, and alcoholism, to name just a few. The history of biological determinism demonstrates the inter-relations between science, politics, and culture.

> **"We may use scientific knowledge to help us make the decision, but only our beliefs about gender —not science— can define our sex."**

In nearly every section of the book, Fausto-Sterling traces historical changes, showing us how our understanding of sexuality has varied dramatically over time as well as geographically across different cultures. In a fascinating history of sexuality, she tells us how homosexuality (and by extension "the homosexual") may have been born in 1869, but that it took another decade of gestation for the modern "heterosexual" to be born. The point is that what is normative is always historically contingent. Furthermore, science hasn't always been the overpowering arbiter of human bodies and sexuality it is today. For example, until the early twentieth century, decisions about intersexual status were

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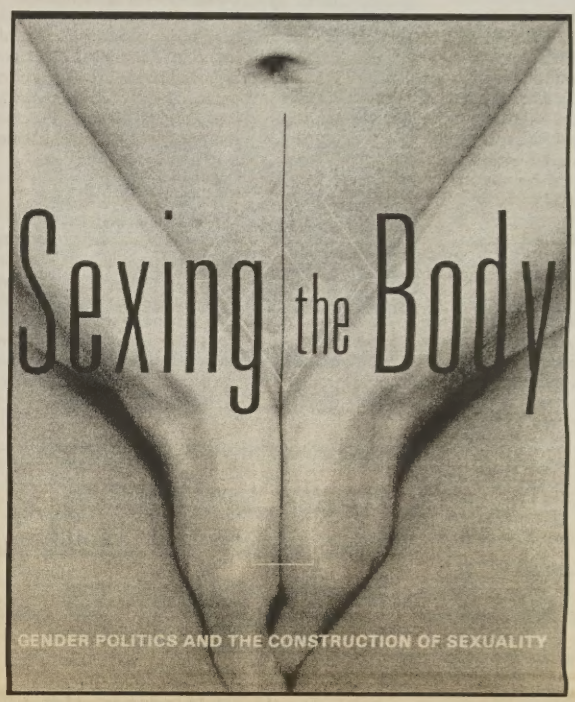
made primarily by lawyers and judges. The century we have recently left behind (or will by the end of the year according to other calculations) was marked by the ever increasing power of science and technology in regulating and disciplining our bodies.

A critical point made by Fausto-Sterling is that the material "human"—our cells, tissues, anatomy, and physiology—is not the unfolding of a pre-determined grand design of our DNA, but rather the result of a conversation with our environment and culture. "Sexuality," she argues, "is a somatic fact created by a cultural effect." Our bodies and our sciences are both discursive and material. We cannot afford to attend to one while ignoring the other. In fact, what marks Fausto-Sterling's scholarship and politics is a steadfast refusal to take sides in the nature/culture, biology/politics, science/culture debates. Humans, in their biological and social complexities, can be understood exclusively in neither the realm of biology nor culture. Instead, she argues, we are co-constituted of and by both—and must remain so in our intellectual and political pursuits. Similarly, science is not the objective pursuit of value-free knowledge. Fausto-Sterling insists, "Scientists do not simply read nature to find truths to apply to the social world. Instead, they use truths taken from our social relationships to structure, read, and interpret the natural."

One of the many things Fausto-Sterling does so well is illuminate the details of scientific practice and process. Rather than reduce science to a "text" that can be read, she presents it as a living and healthy social institution that grows with and shapes the culture in which it exists. This is a profoundly important contribution to feminist science studies because it presents a road map of how to combine feminism and science for those of us committed to pursuing experimental practice. In a fascinating chapter on the corpus collosum, Fausto-Sterling traces how scientists produce "difference." The corpus collosum are a set of fibres that run between the two sides of the brain. A topographical map shows a complicated set of ridges and valleys, "much like a bird with complicated wing formation. Furthermore, these wings co-mingle with the ascending white matter tracts . . . making the lateral portions of the corpus collosum essentially impossible to define with certainty." But how do scientists study this structure? Fausto-Sterling shows how the corpus collosum is "tamed" and made measurable. The structure is imaged through two- and three-dimensional cross sections. These sections are quantified and then analyzed, and the abstract measurements come to represent the complex corpus collosum and the data through which "difference" is measured.

My favorite chapter, because of its sheer inventiveness, is called "The Rodents Tale." Here, Fausto-Sterling presents a fascinating history of the use and centrality of rodents in the elucidation of human sexuality. The chapter is a powerful reminder of the extensive use of animal models as a source for theory-making about humans. In presenting the experiments she takes apart the various steps and stages performed. For example, studies of sexual orientation in rats name a lesbian rat as one that mounts, and a gay male rat as one that responds to being mounted! What, we are left to wonder, is one to make of the lesbian rat who mounts a gay male rat and produces viable offspring? In these tightly encoded, rigid categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality, straight and gay rats, such events have gone largely unnoticed and untheorized. Yet, as Fausto-Sterling shows, these are precisely the moments that disrupt normative theories of gender and heterosexuality.



Fausto-Sterling also engages the history of feminism and queer politics, showing how changing gender and sexual norms change the culture in which science is done and eventually, change science itself—in both progressive and regressive ways. For example, in a chapter on sex hormones, she shows how central the research on hormones was in the development of the birth control movement. Yet this movement, and Margaret Sanger in particular (along with important scientists), had strong links to the eugenics movement. "More children from the fit, less from the unfit, that is the chief issue of birth control," she quotes Sanger saying in 1919. Thus the regulation of the bodies of women of color and poor women moves center stage, regulation that continues to this day.

Science is also, of course, clearly at the heart of the story of contemporary sexuality and sexual politics. Some in the queer movement have rejoiced in recent work that suggests the "immutability" of homosexuality. Work on the size of the hypothalamus, gay genes, twin studies, and links to ratio of finger lengths have all been widely publicized. Others—and Anne Fausto-Sterling clearly takes this position—argue that bolstering the claim that sexuality is biologically determined with inconclusive and poorly designed and interpreted studies does not enhance our goals of justice and equality. Instead, our hopes must lie squarely in the political and cultural arena. We must work to disrupt the natural/normal two sexes we have created and open our minds and imaginations to the range of variation that marks our sexuality. Such variation includes the realm of our physical bodies (chromosomes, genitals, secondary sexual characteristics), psychological diversities, and cross-cultural and historical variation of gender identities.

But as Fausto-Sterling constantly reminds us, science is squarely intertwined in politics and culture. As feminists and queers, we cannot ignore science. "Gender and science form a system," she suggests, "that operates as a single unit—for better and for worse." If gender is at the heart of feminist and queer politics, so is science. Our future requires a willingness to place ourselves in the intersecting worlds of race, gender, and science—elucidating, elaborating, and disrupting normative sexuality and normative science. It is time to (un)discipline our bodies and our minds.

Banu Subramaniam is an assistant research professor in the departments of Women's Studies and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Arizona.

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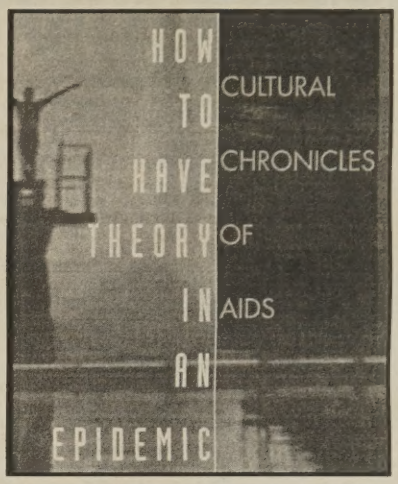
An Epidemic of Signification

How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS

By Paula A. Treichler
Duke University Press, 1999, $22.95

Reviewed by Jodi Kelber-Kaye



Let me state outright that I am a huge fan of Paula Treichler's work. Over the years, Treichler has mapped the many effects of AIDS with analytic skill, compassion, and humor. In this readable and accessible new book she deftly combines biomedical and immunological expertise with incisive cultural criticism. As few other single volumes have done, *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic* analyzes AIDS in terms of gender, sexuality, race, nation, and scientific research. This kind of cross-disciplinary work is no small feat, and neither are Treichler's teaching appointments in the College of Medicine, the Institute of Communications Research, and the Women's Studies Program, all at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Such diverse affiliations might make interconnected scholarship difficult for some, but clearly this is not so in Treichler's case. She rigorously weaves all areas of her expertise together, demonstrating that linguistic analysis is an important task in all disciplines.

How to Have Theory in an Epidemic, which includes some of Treichler's earlier, now reconfigured essays, chronicles and analyzes the production of certain cultural manifestations of AIDS over the last twenty years. Treichler's point is to show that, in addition to being a huge material human crisis, AIDS is also an "epidemic of signification." In other words, Treichler shows that the word "AIDS" has particular meanings and definitions in our culture because of the stories (narratives) we have been telling about it. She considers the narrative representation of AIDS in cultural artifacts ranging from television movies and *Cosmopolitan* magazine, to AIDS conferences and popular periodicals like *Discover* and *Newsweek*, to activist work (pamphlets, videos, cartoons, and flyers). Treichler wants us to understand AIDS as not only an infectious disease but also as a cultural and linguistic phenomenon that tells us a tremendous amount about how power operates.

The media repressed the fact that women actually did contract AIDS because that information countered the "rugged vagina" theory and detracted from the almost-fanatical focus on prostitutes as the only women with AIDS.

The narratives of AIDS, Treichler demonstrates, involve contestations over the power to claim the production of truth. That such contestations take place in the linguistic realm, she points out, is a condition of human life, and this is neither good nor bad. Therefore, her purpose in writing this book, thankfully, is not to declare which representations are right and which are wrong. Instead, Treichler systematically analyzes what kinds of stories are told about AIDS, who gets to tell them, at what cost, and to whose benefit. But her purpose is also to show how all kinds of cultural productions—those of scientists, activists, journalists, media executives, etc.—operate together, producing contradictory narratives that sometimes enable each other, sometimes constrain each other. At the same time, Treichler is careful to attend to the real materiality of AIDS; she never eclipses the fact that these narrative contestations have profound consequences for human lives.

One might think that there is nothing new to say about AIDS, that no other epidemic has seen such an incredible amount of analysis. And Treichler does underscore points many of us know by now. For example, she explains that AIDS was configured as a gay male disease from the first reportage; this view continues to be a bias in AIDS reporting and media representation today. AIDS was also configured as originating in Africa, and spread to the human population as the result of "uncivilized" sexual activities. AIDS reporting and media representations continue to be inflected by this idea as well. Treichler also takes up women's vulnerability to AIDS. For instance, she explains that early reports of the unlikelihood that women could contract AIDS were based on a particular biomedical explanation of transmission, the "rugged vagina" theory. As opposed to the vulnerable rectum, the vagina, it was thought, *could* withstand vigorous activity with a penis.

Treichler's consideration of these issues certainly bears repeating, but she also breaks new ground by showing how these biases operate in conjunction with other cultural meanings. Representations of AIDS are not simply homophobic (or misogynist, or racist), Treichler points out, but rather, they are complex systems in which some stories are privileged and some are negated. The same stories are not, however, privileged all the time. Through her close readings of narratives about the relationships between AIDS and gay men, women, the "Third World," and the media, Treichler makes clear that the privileging of certain kinds of stories about AIDS has had devastating effects on people. These representations help determine program funding, drug testing and development, and cultural attitudes toward people with AIDS.

First, Treichler points out that while representations of AIDS as a "gay disease" conflate homosexuality with the epidemic, such narratives also lead to massive inaccuracies about gay sex in the scientific press. However, the response of gay activists to these stories enabled their conversations with AIDS researchers. These discussions helped to counter popular and scientific misconceptions and produced alliances with doctors that developed safe sex recommendations and other policies to address activist concerns.

Second, the glaring lack of serious consideration of women in the early days of the epidemic—along

Continued on next page

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June's BookBUZZ is Soldier, A Poet's Childhood by June Jordan. In this thrilling and absolutely fresh memoir of a young girl's everyday life, Jordan carries us into the shock of what childhood looks and feels like from the inside of a household both violent and loving, both idyllic and roiled by turmoil and conflict. Written with exceptional beauty, Soldier stands and delivers an eloquent, heart-breaking, hilarious and hopeful witness to the beginnings of a truly extraordinary American life. "With searing honesty and the ferocity of a child, June Jordan has once again found a way to make the impossible brutality of living a song." -Ntozake Shange

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Continued from previous page

with the confusing, contradictory accounts of women's relationships to the epidemic—highlight the troubling relationship that women have had with mainstream medical institutions. Typically, women's bodies are misunderstood and under-studied in mainstream medicine. Is the vagina rugged and therefore not susceptible to HIV, like the vulnerable rectum? Is the vagina a breeding ground for HIV-laden sperm, making prostitutes the contemporary "Typhoid Marys"?

Treichler points out the cultural ramifications of such biases and contradictions about women's bodies. She shows that, for example, some publications (including leading feminist publications) asserted that women had little risk of getting AIDS due to the "rugged vagina" theory. The media repressed the fact that women actually *did* contract AIDS because that information countered the rugged vagina theory, and detracted from the almost-fanatical focus on prostitutes as the only women with AIDS. These repressions and omissions, of course, did nothing to increase women's participation in clinical trials for AIDS medications. On the other hand, such myths about women and AIDS propelled the formation of the Women and AIDS Caucus out of ACT UP New York, and the publication of their book *Women, AIDS, and Activism* (South End Press, 1992). Again, Treichler shows that in spite of cultural biases about women's bodies, women's activism has been able to produce the information and health care women need.

In her chapters on AIDS and the Third World, Treichler points out how U.S. reportage presents an uncomplicated picture of wasting, uncivilized, and inactive natives who do not take charge of their own health, nor work toward education and prevention measures. This simplistic picture of Third World AIDS obfuscates the very complicated relationships between local, national, and cultural forces and presents a dramatically distorted view of certain cultural practices (i.e., voodoo in Haiti; bestiality in Africa).

Furthermore, gross generalizations in "First World" accounts of Third World AIDS abound; many such accounts ignore the fact that in Africa alone there are "more than fifty countries, nine hundred ethnic groups, and three hundred language families." (The representation of AIDS as a disease, too, suffers from generalizations. Treichler points out that the disease has more than 40 distinct clinical manifestations.) Also, U.S. journalists do not rely on the work of African and other Third World journalists. First World accounts of Third World AIDS rarely include the views of medical experts from the Third World, nor report on the existence of activist- and state-supported safer sex campaigns. With few opportunities for international discussion, First World biases about the Third World make international headlines, and the numbers usually do the talking. As Treichler adroitly points out, "statistical knowledge travels well; cultural knowledge does not." Sound cultural theory would, Treichler states, challenge the supremacy of many accounts of AIDS.

How to Have Theory in an Epidemic makes an immense contribution to cultural studies, queer studies, science, and other fields concerned with linguistic deconstruction. At the same time, Treichler's attention to AIDS activism is outstanding. I was delighted to see how much activist work she analyzed in order to demonstrate the best way to have theory in an epidemic.

My only critique is that the book covers too many case studies. Each chapter is filled to the brim with examples, particularly those on the media. Trying to account for both "mainstream" and activist work, Treichler unfortunately is unable to do very close readings of all her sources. Because her detailed analyses of the made-for-television movies *An Early Frost* and *Our Sons* are so rich, I found myself wishing she could have presented even more of that kind of criticism. One of the strengths of the book, however, is that Treichler leaves no stone unturned.

Paula Treichler teaches us how to read the chronicles of our time—how to understand that competing narratives of truth are embedded in "seemingly straightforward and commonsense understandings of identity, language, representation, and cultural practice." We also see over and over again how such narratives serve as the symbolic "staging ground for both ideological and material struggles." I am forever indebted to *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic.* Despite my familiarity with scientific and media narratives, and with AIDS activist communities, Treichler reminds me that theory is not separate from practice. She does more than have theory in an epidemic. She shows how theory and practice inform each other in the midst of an epidemic.

Jodi Kelber-Kaye is a lesbian mom and PhD candidate in comparative cultural and literary studies at the University of Arizona. Her current research focuses on the representations of reproductive technologies in film and TV. She has just relocated to Baltimore, Maryland, with her partner, their son, and their cat.

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EventsEtc Calendar!

JUNE 2000

Visual Arts ~ Film ~ Dance ~ Groups ~ Gatherings ~ Ongoing Classes ~ Notices

NOW! DEATH: A LOVE STORY
Thru May 31. Michelle LeBrun's award-winning film was a Sundance Film Festival official selection (1998, 64 min.). May 25, 8pm; May 27, 10:30am; May 28, 2pm; May 31, 5:30pm. $6/MFA members, seniors, and students; $7/general admission. Museum of Fine Arts, Huntington Ave., Bos. Info, 369-3300; Box Office, 369-3770.

LETTING GO: A HOSPICE JOURNEY
Knock-out documentary by Susan Froemke and Deborah Dickson (1996, 90 min.). May 27, 11:45am. $6/MFA members, seniors, and students; $7/general admission. Museum of Fine Arts, Huntington Ave., Bos. Info, 369-3300; Remis Auditorium Box Office, 369-3770.

CELEBRATING CAMBRIDGE WOMEN & WORK
Thru June 23. A photo exhibit by Vaughn Sills and Sarah Putnam. M-F, 9:30am-5:30pm. Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second St., E. Camb. Info, 577-1400.

STREET VISION
Thru July 1. Twenty-five years after the fall of Saigon, the Ho Chi Minh City Child Welfare Foundation and PhotoVoice present *Street Vision: Photography by Street Children Living in Saigon, Vietnam*. Artists for Humanity, 288-300 A Street, Bos. 737-2455, 868-1516, or www.photovoice.org.

SIMMONS COLLEGE SUMMER PROGRAMS
Thru August 8. Simmons offers summer programs in many areas for professional growth and personal enrichment. Session I: May 22-June 30. Session II: July 5-August 8. Info: Graduate Programs, 521-2910; Undergraduate Programs, 521-2502; http://www.simmons.edu.

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The Women's Table

Find love or new friends! The Women's Table brings together six single, compatible women who meet in a Boston area restaurant to eat, share, laugh, and exchange. Locations in Boston & Eastern MA, Southern NH, and Southern ME. Info: Beth, 781-255-6991 or www.womenstable.com.

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JUN 1 THE MOST FABULOUS STORY EVER TOLD
Thru June 24. Paul Rudnick's hilarious play ponders what the world would be like had God made Adam & Steve and Jane & Mabel, not Adam & Eve. Presented by SpeakEasy Stage Company, resident theatre at the Boston Center for the Arts. Reservations, 437-7172. Info, www.SpeakEasyStage.com.

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Boston Pride 2000!

~ June 2-11 ~

See a full calendar of Pride events for Boston and other major cities inside!

(next page)

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JUN 2 WOMEN'S DAY AT BROADWAY BICYCLES
All Fridays. Every Friday is Women's Day at Broadway Bicycles—they will be staffed exclusively by women! Broadway Bicycle, 351 Broadway, Camb. 868-3392.

GRADUATION! MULTICULTURAL DANCE EXPRESSION
Thru June 3. A dance show choreographed by Gabrie'l Atchison, with A Few Good Women, a dance troupe of women of different shapes, colors, ages, sexualities, and levels of experience joined together by a love of dance. 8pm. $8 sliding scale. Green Street Studios, 185 Green St., Camb. Info, 625-4951.

JUN 3 BREAD AND ROSES
The Boston Women's Rainbow Chorus, Boston's chorus for lesbians, bisexual women, and their allies, presents an evening of song. Includes the world premiere of Eric Helmuth's *Bread and Roses*, the US premiere of *April Rain Song* (text by Langston Hughes, music by Stephen Smith). 8pm. $10-25. Arlington Street Church, Arlington & Boylston Sts., Bos. Info, 424-8900.

JUN 6 YWCA WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP EVENT
The YWCA Boston will hold its 6th Annual Women's Leadership Event, featuring the Academy of Women Achievers Class of 2000 Awards Luncheon. Info, 351-7622.

CHEAP DATE
PussyWhipped Publications and Stool Solutions present an evening of queer girl smut! *Philogyny*'s Second Annual Lesbian Erotic Reading for Pride features Hanne Blank, Amie M. Evans, Amatul Hannan, Jaclyn Friedman, Dawn Dougherty, and Jean Powers, with MC Sandra Valls and Drag King Dirk Diggler. 21+. 8:30pm. $5. Lizard Lounge, Mass. Ave., Camb. Advance tix May 6: New Words (Camb.) and Grand Opening! (Bkln.). Info, *philogynyzine@hotmail.com*.

LES SAMPOU, DIANE PONZIO & MINDY JOSTYN
Three dynamic songstresses unite for a free 20th Anniversary Celebration for Fishman Transducers. Start with dinner (half-price, 4:30-6:30pm), followed by an evening of great music! 17 Holland St., Davis Sq., Som. 776-2004 or www.johnnyds.com.

CHUTNEY POPCORN. PROVINCETOWN FILM FESTIVAL JUNE 18

JUN 7 WRITERS' ROOM SPRING READING
The Writers' Room of Boston will hold its seventh annual Spring Reading celebrating the work of resident writers. Writers Toni Amato, Carol Dine, Joe Fox, Nancy Hurlbut, Nancy Kassell and Carol Korty will read; performer/writer CD Collins will host. 7pm. Free. Brookline Booksmith, 279 Harvard St., Bkln.

BETH COHEN GROUP, TATIANA SARBINSKA & BALLA TOUNKARA
A benefit for Doctors Without Borders. Start with dinner (half-price, 4:30-6:30pm), followed by an evening of great world music! 17 Holland St., Davis Sq., Som. 776-2004 or www.johnnyds.com.

JUN 8 IMMACULATE INFECTION
Thru June 24. Presented by the Theater Offiensive. Find out what a stoic Latina housewife (Noelia Ortiz Cortés) and a cranky Jewish diva (Abe Rybeck) have to offer each other. Thur-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 10pm. $17. Black Box Theater, Boston Center for the Arts, Tremont St., Bos. Tix & info, 426-2787.

JUN 9 A CENTURY OF WOMEN COMPOSERS
Ashmont Hill Chamber Music celebrates its 15th season of "risk-taking, gutsy programming . . ." *Boston Globe*. Candlelight concert features works of Amy Beach, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Rebecca Clarke, Marilyn J. Ziffrin, Marjorie Merryman, Joan Tower, and Chen Yi. 7pm. $8; $10/students, seniors; $25/family pass. Peabody Hall, All Saints Church, 209 Ashmont St., Dorch. Info, 496-6046.

©Laurel Jensen.

JEZEBELLE 2000 · JUNE 25 ·

FIVE BOTTLES IN A SIX PACK
Thru June 24. Presented by the Theater Offiensive. In the face of everyday racism and misogyny, wouldn't it make perfect sense to be, well, mad?! Renita Martin calls the bluff on sanity and challenges the very notion of health and sickness in a world as messed up as ours. Fri, 10pm; Sat, 8pm; Sun, 7pm. $17. Black Box Theater, Boston Center for the Arts, Tremont St., Bos. Tix & info, 426-2787.

JUN 10 CANOE & KAYAK DEMO DAY
Charles River Canoe & Kayak will hold a demo day at Lake Cochituate State Park. Charles River Canoe & Kayak offers canoe and kayak rentals and sales, sea kayaking instructions and trips, and kids' paddling camps. Lake Cochituate State Park, 93 Commonwealth Rd. (Rte. 30), Natick. 965-5110 or www.ski-paddle.com.

JUN 13 BEL CANTO: A STAGED READING
Thru June 21. Theater Offensive's artist-in-residence and NEA award-winner Daniel Alexander Jones follows a young gay man's struggle to negotiate between the magical world of opera and the hard-edged reality around him. Tue-Wed, 8pm. $8. Black Box Theater, Boston Center for the Arts, Tremont St., Bos. Tix & info, 542-4214.

JUN 14 WOMEN ON WOMEN'S SPORT
New Words Live presents a reading by Joli Sandoz and Joby Winans, editors, with Carrie Dearborn, Susan Eisenberg and Pat Griffin from their book *Whatever It Takes: Women on Women's Sport*. 6pm. Free & ♿. New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St., Camb. Info, 876-5310.

FTM OPEN HOUSE
All FTMs are welcome to attend this open house during Pride week! Refreshments will be served. 7-9pm. Info: FTM Center, 971-9434.

JUN 15 PROVINCETOWN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
Thru June 18. Provocative selection of premieres and sneak previews of this coming season's most exciting art films. Festival includes parties, visiting filmmakers, town meeting starring Lily Tomlin, and filmmaker symposim followed by presentation of this year's Filmmaker on the Edge Award to Christine Vachon. Info, 508-487-FILM or www.ptownfilmfest.com. Tix: Emerson MajesTix, 824-8000; or Box Office Express, 170 Commercial St., P'town.

JUN 16 IRMA THOMAS AT JOHNNY D's!
Don't miss the Queen of Sweet Soul! Start with dinner (half-price, 4:30-6:30pm), followed by an evening of great music. 17 Holland St., Davis Sq., Som. 776-2004 or www.johnnyds.com.

WILDERNESS HEALS
Thru June 18. Women hiking for women healing. Have a great time hiking, and raise money for the Elizabeth Stone House at the same time. Training hikes, fundraising support, info on mountain safety, transportation, food, lodging, and an opportunity to help women and children. For info packet: Beth Eliot Schultz, 522-3659 x203 or www.elizabethstonehouse. org.

JUN 17 TENNIS FOR LIFE
Annual event raises money for Helping Our Women (HOW), a non-profit organization providing resources and referrals to Cape Area women with chronc and life-threatening/disabling illness. Provincetown. Info, 508-487-3684.

JUN 18 MAKO YOSHIKAWA
New Words Live presents a reading by Mako Yoshikawa from her stunning debut novel *One Undred and One Ways*. 3pm. Free & ♿. New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St., Camb. Info, 876-5310.

JUN 22 HAPPYDATES
HappyDates is Boston's newest and most exciting way to meet other singles. Events for lesbians, gay men, and straight people. **June 22:** Lesbian event. Info/to reserve, 965-DATE; or visit www.happydates.com.

14TH ANNUAL GOLDEN THREADS
Thru June 25. Lesbians from around the world converge in Provincetown to celebrate the joy of being lesbians! Performances by singer Jamie Anderson, percussionist Ubaka Hill, and comedian Robin Tyler. Workshops, singles activities, Saturday night banquet, surprise closing ritual event. Provincetown Inn, P'town. Info: 802-848-8002 or GOLDENTRED@aol.com.

JUN 24 FAMILIES OF COLOR & INFANT ADOPTION
Bright Futures Adoption Center welcomes birth and adoptive families of color to a free workshop, Families of Color and Infant Adoption: Options & Opportunities. Meet birth and adoptive parents who have been through the process. 9am-1pm. Free. Foley, Hoag & Eliot, One Post Office Sq., Bos. For info or to register (by June 15), 978-263-5400 or adopt@comap.com.

AGAINST THE TIDE
And August 12. Eighth annual fundraising swim to benefit the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition. Two separate one-mile swims: competitive swim, 9am; fitness/recreational swim, 9:3am..Followed by breakfast and celebration. Preregister by June 16 with $100 minimum in pledges. **June 24:** Hopkinton State Park, Hopkinton. **August 12:** Nickerson State Park, Brewster. Info, 781-891-0180 or www.mbcc.org/swim.

JUN 1 JEZEBELLE 2000
New Words Live presents *Jezebelle 2000: The Glam Lit Book Tour*, with underground faves Elena Georgiou, Lauren Sanders, and Cheryl B. 3pm. Free & ♿. New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St., Camb. Info, 876-5310.

HOT PICKS

THE HO CHI MINH CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION AND PHOTOVOICE PRESENT "STREET VISIONS: PHOTOGRAPHY BY STREET CHILDREN LIVING IN SAIGON" (THRU JULY 1). PAUL RUDNICK'S HILARIOUS PLAY "THE MOST FABULOUS STORY EVER TOLD" PONDERS A WORLD OF ADAM & STEVE (& JANE & MABEL), NOT ADAM & EVE (JUNE 1-24)! PROVINCETOWN'S INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PROVIDES A SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE COMING SEASON'S MOST PROVOCATIVE ART FILMS (JUNE 15-18). AND NEW WORDS LIVE PRESENTS JEZEBELLE 2000: THE GLAM LIT BOOK TOUR (JUNE 25)!

Pride 2000

BOSTON PRIDE EVENTS

Boston Pride Week Is June 2-11
www.bostonpride.org
Look for Pride Events in other cities marked with ▼ symbol in National Events.

JUN 2 — FLAG-RAISING CEREMONY
The Rainbow Flag is raised to mark the opening of Boston Pride Week. Guest Speakers: Andre Davis, Pride Committee; Michael Kelly, Mayor's Liaison to the Gay Community; others TBA. Sponsored by the City of Boston. 12noon. Government Center, Bos.

JUN 4 — AIDS WALK 2000
15th Annual AIDS Walk, sponsored by AIDS Action Committee, begins at Boston Common and ends at the Hatch Shell. Info: www.aac.org.

JUN 5 — PRIDELIGHTS
PrideLights Bridge Builder Concert and Tree Lighting Ceremony. Outside the Boston Center for the Arts, Tremont & Clarendon Sts., South End, Bos.

JUN 7 — PRIDE EVENT AT CHAPS
More details TBA. See www.bostonpride.org.

JUN 8 — PUL-SA-TION
Music is Vision - Vision is Pride. Boston DJs Battle for the Best 2000. Hatchshell on the Esplanade, Bos.

JUN 9 — BOSTON'S 6TH ANNUAL DYKE MARCH!
Dykes take to the streets and celebrate Dyke Pride with the 6th Annual Dyke March, followed by a rally on Boston Common. For dykes, dyke-lovin' women, transwomen and transmen, bisexuals, gays, and anybody who supports our freedom. Events are Spanish- and ASL-interpreted, and ♿. 7pm: Gather at Copley Square (in front of BPL); 7:30: March begins; 8:15-9:30pm: Rally.

PRIDE DINNER BALL
Formal Dinner Ball. More details TBA! See www.bostonpride.org.

JUN 10 — 30TH ANNUAL BOSTON PRIDE PARADE & RALLY!
Boston's 30th Annual Pride Parade leaves Copley Square at 12noon, winds through the South End, and moves on to Boston Common where the celebration continues with a rally featuring speakers, entertainment, and food!

YOUTH PRIDE DANCE
Details on this event are TBA. See www.bostonpride.org.

PRIDE DANCE CELEBRATION FOR WOMEN
Sponsored by FEVER! Dance Productions. Scads of women, and dance music to die for by Boston's best women DJs! Free parking, air-conditioned, huge dance floor. 8pm-midnight. $10. Sons of Italy Hall, Winchester. Info: 781-648-0722, www.djdee. com/schedule.htm, or http://www.djdee. com.

JUN 11 — PRIDE WORSHIP CELEBRATION
The Metropolitan Community Church of Boston will offer a Pride worship celebration, with Pastor Joan Saniuk preaching. MCC is a church of the LGBT Community, but is open to all. 6pm. 131 Cambridge St. (near Gov't Ctr.), Bos. Info, 978-0404 or www.mccboston.org.

PRIDEFEST 2000
Presented by CHAPS and Fenway Community Health Center. Details TBA. See www.bostonpride.org.

LAST DANCE PARTY
Last Dance Pride Party will be held at Avalon. Details TBA. See www.bostonpride.org.

JUN 14 — FTM OPEN HOUSE
All FTMs are welcome to attend this open house during Pride week! Refreshments will be served. 7-9pm. Info: FTM Center, 971-9434.

JUN 22 — BOSTON PRIDE SUMMER SOIREE 2000
Third Annual Boston Pride Summer Soiree 2000 to benefit Astraea Lesbian Action Foundation. Experience the power of lesbian philanthropy. 6:30-8:30pm. $50/non-member; $25/member. For more info, including location of Cambridge event, call 212-529-8021 or visit Web site at 222.astraea.org.

JUN 23 — PRIDE IN HEALTH BREAKFAST
GLBT Health Access Project presents the 5th Annual Pride in Health Breakfast. This year's event features a discussion of gay men's health and other issues effecting the GLBT community. Speakers: Dr. Howard Koh, SafeGuards Project director Christopher Bartlett, author Michael Thomas Ford. 9am-12noon. Free & ♿. Tremont House Hotel, 275 Tremont St., Bos. RSVP by June 19: 988-2605, x202 or jmahoney@jrihealth.org.

More EventsEtc

JUN 28 — HAPPYDATES
HappyDates is Boston's newest and most exciting way to meet other singles. Events for lesbians, gay men, and straight people. **June 27:** Worcester event. Info/to reserve, 965-DATE; or visit www.happydates.com.

LESLIE AHMED
New Words Live presents a reading by Leila Ahmed from her moving memoir, *A Border Passage*. 6pm. Free & ♿. New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St., Camb. Info, 876-5310.

JUN 29 — READING: A WOMAN'S PATH
New Words Live presents a reading by Lucy McCauley, editor, with Tehila Lieberman and Emily Hiestand from their book *A Woman's Path: Women's Best Spiritual Travel Writing*. 6pm. Free & ♿. New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St., Camb. Info, 876-5310.

JUN 30 — ALL WOMEN'S GRAND CANYON RAFTING TRIP
Thru July 7. Women's World Adventures presents multi-activity, small group tours for moderately fit, non-smoking women over 30. Trips to Maine, the Southwest, Canadian Rockies, Grand Tetons & Yellowstone, Fiji, and New Zealand. Info, 800-664-8922 or e-mail wwadventures@sedona.net.

JUL 7 — LAURA LOVE
(Tentative). Zoë recording artist Laura Love is one of the most dynamic songwriters and performers you'll ever see. Start with dinner (half-price, 4:30-6:30pm), followed by an evening of great music! 17 Holland St., Davis Sq., Som. 776-2004 or www.johnnyds.com.

JUL 13 — KIM GUTSCHOW
New Words Live presents a talk by Kim Gutschow, contributor to *Women's Buddhism, Buddhism's Women*. 6pm. Free & ♿. New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St., Camb. Info, 876-5310.

THE MOST FABULOUS STORY EVER TOLD
JUNE 1
SANDY HEFFLEY & HELEN MCELWAIN

AUG 4 — NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL
Thru August 6. Fri, Aug 4: *On a Newport Night* features Cliff Eberhardt, John Gorka, Lucy Kaplansky & Cheryl Wheeler. 8pm. $28. Hotel Viking, Newport, RI. Sat, Aug 5: Willie Nelson, Shawn Colvin, Bela Fleck & the Flecktones, The String Cheese Incident, Guy Clark, Slaid Cleaves, Stacey Earle & the Jewels, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Terri Hendrix 2ith Lloyde Maines, Peter Keane Trio, Melissa Ferrick, Bob Neuwirth, and Kerry Grombacher. Sun, Aug 6: Natalie Merchant, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Dar Williams, Steve Riley & the Mamou Playboys, Peter Rowan's Texas Trio with Tony Rice, Richard Shindell Band, Natalie McMaster, Carrie Newcomer, Mary Gauthier, Toshi Reagon & Big Lovely, Jess Klein, and Equation. Sat-Sun: 11:30am-6:30pm; Fort Adams State Park, Newport, RI. Oned day ticket: $45/advance; $48/festival weekend. On-site parking, $6. Two-day ticket Sat/Sun, Ft. Adams, $75, exp. July 1. Tix: TicketMaster, 617/508-931-2000. Info: 401-847-3700 or www.newportfolk.com.

AUG 12 — AGAINST THE TIDE
Eighth annual fundraising swim to benefit the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition. (See June 24 listing.) Nickerson State Park, Brewster. Info, 781-891-0180 or www.mbcc.org/swim.

AUG 21 — SUMMER CAMP FOR GAY & LESBIAN ADULTS
Thru August 27. Camp Camp, a summer camp in Maine for gay and lesbian adults, offers canoeing, sailing, dance, drawing/painting, theatre, hiking, swimming, singing, soccer, softball, tennis, and more! Info, 1-888-924-8380 or www.campcamp.com.

SEPT 16 — TURKISH ODYSSEY FOR WOMEN
Thru September 29. Adventure Associates offers a Mediterranean coastal odyssey for women. (See National Events.)

LESLEY COLLEGE INTENSTIVE RESIDENCY OPTION (IRO)
Thru April 28, 2001. Learn about Lesley Collge's Intensive Residency Program, a unique undergraduate program for adults. **Open House Dates:** Sept 16, 2000; Oct 28, 2000; Mar 3, 2001; and Apr 28, 2001. **Residency Dates:** Sept 15-23, 2000; Oct 27-Nov4, 2000; Mar 2-10, 2001; Apr 27-May 5, 2001. Info: Olive Silva, 349-8478 or osilva@mail.lesley.edu.

2001 — AFRICAN CULTURAL & WILDLIFE ADVENTURE
January 12-February 1, 2001. (See National Events.)

National Events of Note

JUN 2 — PRIDE 25: CAPITAL PRIDE FESTIVAL ▼
Thru June 13. Washington DC celebrates its 25th Pride March with ten days of cultural, athletic, political, community service, and entertainment activities. Culminates in parade and street fair on June 11. Info, 202-661-7026, capitalpride@wwc.org, or www.capitalpride.org.

JUN 3 — TORONTO PRIDE FUNDRAISER ▼
Toronto Pride 2000 Block-O-Rama Fundraiser features Toronto's best poets and fiction writers (Barbara Elizabeth, Benton McKnight, Camille Bailey, Debbie Young, Dee Smith, Norman Kester, Rabin Ramah, Rożena Maart, TJ Bryan, and Virma Benjamin); the lush rhythmic sounds of Toronto's instrumental group, Tasa; and loads of door prizes. 5-10pm. $15/ Central YMCA, 80 Grosvenor Ave., Toronto (College/Yonge two blocks north of College). Tix: Pride Office, 65 Wellesley East, Suite 501, Toronto; 416-927-7433; www.pridetoronto.com. Info: Rabin Ramah, 416-977-7725 x29 or Pride, 416-927-7433.

JUN 14 — WILDERNESS HEALS
Thru June 18. Have a great time hiking, and raise money for the Elizabeth Stone House at the same time. Training hikes, fundraising support, info on mountain safety, transportation, food, lodging, and an opportunity to help women and children. Info: Beth Eliot Schultz, 522-3659 x203 or www.elizabethstonehouse. org.

JUN 18 — NEW YORK PRIDE 2000 ▼
Take Pride, Take Joy, Take Action is the theme of New York's Pride Week 2000. **Jun 18:** Rally: Bryant Park (42nd St & 6th Ave), 2pm-6pm. Info: e-mail hoprally@yahoo.com. **Jun 25:** 31st Annual Gay & Lesbian Pride March: 5th Ave. (steps off at 52nd St), 12noon, Info: e-mail hopmarch@yahoo.com. PrideFest 2000: Greenwich Village (Washington St from Christopher to Spring St.), 11am-10:30pm, Info: e-mail hopfest@yahoo.com. Dance 2000: Pier 54 (13th St. @ Hudson River), 4:30-11pm, Info: e-mail hopdance@yahoo. com. Fireworks: 10:30-11pm.

JUN 30 — ALL WOMEN'S GRAND CANYON RAFTING TRIP
Thru July 7. Women's World Adventures presents multi-activity, small group tours for moderately fit, non-smoking women over 30. Trips to Maine, the Southwest, Canadian Rockies, Grand Tetons & Yellowstone, Fiji, and New Zealand. Info, 800-664-8922 or e-mail wwadventures@sedona.net.

JUL 15 — BENEFITS FOR HELPING OUR WOMEN (HOW)
Thru October 14. Helping Our Women is a non-profit organization providing resources and referrals to women with chronic and life-threatening or disabling illness from Provincetown to Eastham. **July 15:** Music Festival to benefit HOW and the Laurel Brooke Music Fund, Motta Field, Provincetown, MA. **September 9:** 13th Annual Harbor Swim for Life:. **October 13-14:** 9th Annual HOW Benefit Auction. HOW, PO Box 1376, 336 Commercial St., #9, Provincetown, MA 02657. 508-487-HELP (4357).

JUL 21 — SAN DIEGO PRIDE 2000 ▼
Thru July 23. *Open Hearts + Open Minds = Pride in Action* is the theme for San Diego's Lesbian & Gay Pride celebration. **July 21:** Rally, 8pm-10pm, Free, The Center @ 3909 Centre St. **July 22:** Fun Run, 8am, Free, Balboa Park @ Southeast Corner of 6th Ave. & Laurel St.; Parade, 12pm-3pm, University Ave. between Normal St. & 6th Ave. **Festival:** July 22, 2-10pm & July 23, 12pm-9pm; $12/1-day pass, $18/weekend pass; Marston Point, Balboa Park. Info: 619-297-7683, e-mail@sdpride.org, or www.sdpride.org.

JUL 31 — DIVERSCITÉ: MONTRÉAL PRIDE CELEBRATION ▼
Thru August 6. *Diverscité* is Montreal's 2000 Pride Celebration for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community. Info: 514-285-4011 or www.diverscite.org. Travel info: Robert-Alex, 888-762-2539.

AUG 27 — SUMMER CAMP FOR GAY & LESBIAN ADULTS
Thru August 27. Camp Camp, a summer camp in Maine for gay and lesbian adults, offers canoeing, sailing, dance, drawing and painting, theatre, hiking, swimming, singing, soccer, softball, tennis, mountain biking, pottery, and more! Info, 1-888-924-8380 or www.campcamp.com.

SEPT 16 — TURKISH ODYSSEY FOR WOMEN
Thru September 29. Woman-owned Adventure Associates will offer a Mediterranean coastal odyssey for women. Includes three days in Istanbul, six-day cruise of the Turquoise Coast, swimming, snorkeling, visiting ancient ruins, and much more. Info: www.adventurassociates.net, adventureassc@quidnunc.net, or 888-532-8352.

JAN 2001 — AFRICAN CULTURAL & WILDLIFE ADVENTURE
January 12-February 1, 2001. Woman-owned Adventure Associates will offer a cultural and wildlife safari in Africa. Tour includes visits to tribal villages and East African parks, walking safari, private land rovers, snorkeling and swimming in the Indian Ocean, and much more. Info: www.adventurassociates.net, adventureassc@quidnunc.net, or 888-532-8352.

We welcome Calendar listings of interest to our readers, but due to limited space, we are not able to print all listings that we receive. Priority is given to free and low-cost events. Please follow our format in preparing listings and submit them by July 13 for the next issue. Please mail them to: Calendar, SOJOURNER, 42 Seaverns Ave., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.
(Sorry, we are not able to take listings by phone.)

Community Bulletin Board

LOCAL & NATIONAL NOTICES

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

LIVEWIRE: AN AWA-STYLE WRITING GROUP
Supportive space where writing will be met with respect and honest feedback. Amherst Writers & Artists method as developed by Pat Schneider in her book *The Writer as Artist*. Everyone welcome. All genres, no experience necessary. Each class includes writing exercises, reading and response, and snacks. Julie Barnes, 522-6191 or queerjules@yahoo.com. .

WOMEN IN THE BUILDING TRADES
Women in the Building Trades is offering free introductory workshops for women who are interested in entering the skilled building trades. Learn about the construction industry and union apprenticeships. Call and register for **either** Wednesday, May 31 or Wednesday, June 7 workshop. 6-8pm. WIBT, 555 Amory St., JP (Orange Line T to Green St.) Info or to register, 524-3010.

VOLUNTEERS

ADULT LEARNING PROGRAM
Help adults learn to read, write and/or speak English. Free training. Day & evening hours available. 144 McBride St., Jamaica Plain. Info: Brenda, 635-5201.

AIDS ACTION COMMITTEE
Find out how you can support a person living with AIDS by delivering meals, providing counseling, becoming a Buddy, or working in AAC's resale store, Boomerangs. **Volunteer Orientations:** May 30, 5:30-9pm; June 8, 5:30-9pm. 131 Clarendon St., 4th fl., Bos. 450-1235.

AIDS CARE PROJECT
The AIDS Care Project/Acupuncture Clinic seeks volunteers in many areas, including clinical assistance, front desk help, administrative support, and data entry. 140 Clarendon St., 6th fl., Bos. Info, 859-3036 x25.

ALACE
Feminist childbirth organization seeks volunteers. Help with office projects and learn about the field of natural childbirth. Association of Labor Assistants & Childbirth Educators, 441-2500.

ASIA NEEDS YOU!
Volunteer for Asian Sisters in Action. If you can spare 2-5 hrs./mo. during non-business hours, we'd love to hear from you. Monthly brunches and camaraderie with Asian women of different backgrounds and generations in Boston and surrounding communities. Info: Priscilla at PLee1962@aol.com or 776-9212.

BIG SISTER ASSOCIATION
The Big Sister Association of Greater Boston is seeking women to serve as role models to girls in the community. **Volunteer info sessions:** June 6, 6-7pm; June 17, 11:30am-12:30pm; June 19, 6-7pm; June 28, 6-7pm. 161 Mass. Ave., 2nd flr., Bos. 236-8060.

CHIAPAS PROJECT
SIPAZ (Servicio Internacional para la Paz), a coalition of North & Latin American and European organizations dedicated to supporting the peace process in Chiapas, Mexico., is seeking long-term volunteers in Chiapas. Info: SIPAZ, 831-425-1257, admin@sipaz.org, or www.sipaz.org.

CLINIC VISIBILITY
Protect safe access to abortion and other reproductive health care services by joining NOW on the second Saturday of each month to create a pro-choice presence at area health clinics. 8:30-10am. 1842 Beacon St., Brookline. Info, 782-1056.

COMMUNITY SERVINGS
Boston's meal program for individuals and families with HIV/AIDS needs volunteers to prepare and package meals or assist on delivery vans. Flexible shifts available Mon-Fri, 6am-8pm. Info: Ellen, 445-7777.

HELP ABANDONED CATS!
Jamaica Plain cat shelter needs your help in order to keep going. In addition to the desperate need for donations of food, litter, and money, people are needed to adopt or work with abused cats. S. Kahn, 10 Varney St., JP 02130. Info, 522-1852.

HORIZONS INITIATVE
The Horizons Initiative needs individuals to volunteer as Playspace Activity Leaders with children living in homeless family and battered women's shelters. Day and evening hours available. Commitment: 2 hrs./week for at least 6 mos. Training sessions. Info, 287-1900.

MATCH-UP INTERFAITH
MATCH-UP Interfaith Volunteers, Inc. seeks caring volunteers to offer help and companionship to isolated and homebound elders in the Boston area. Assist with reading, shopping, basic home repairs, or going for a walk; accompany to and from medical appointments. Flexible hours, no car needed. Info, 536-3557.

PINE STREET INN
The Pine Street Inn urgently seeks volunteers over the summer months to cover vital services for its homeless guests. Meal servers and clinic receptionists needed. Morning and evening hours available. Info, 521-7626.

SAMARITANS
May is National Suicide Prevention Month. The Samaritans of Boston, a suicide prevention center offering care and understanding to those in crisis and despair, needs volunteers for its 24-hour helpline. For info on training to become a volunteer: 536-2460.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE HELPLINE
The Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline seeks volunteers for a 24-hour phone service. Volunteers receive in-service training, supervision, support, flexible scheduling, a culturally diverse workplace, and proximity to the T. &. Info, 536-0501 x201.

THEATER OFFENSIVE
Boston's premier queer theater seeks volunteers to perform outreach and distribution, assist with artistic submissions, and build a Pride float. Also seeking artistic, marketing, and administrative interns. Info: Renee, 542-4214 or *offensive@tiac.net*.

VISION COMMUNITY SERVICES
Division of the Massachusetts Association for the Blind needs volunteers to read to or shop with a visually impaired neighbor. 2-3 hr./wk. commitment; flexible hours. Info: Donna, 972-9119 or www.mablind.org.

WOMEN'S HOTLINE
The Women's Center needs day and night time volunteers to staff the hotline for a weekly 2-hr. shift. This is a great way to learn about resources in the Boston area. Info, 354-8807.

HEALTH NOTICES

FREE HEALTH SERVICES FOR WOMEN
The Wise Woman Program of VNA Care Plus offers free physical exams, pap tests and mammograms to income-eligible women aged 40 and older with limited or no health insurance. Haverhill/Newburyport: Karen Webber, 978-521-6102; North Shore/Cape Ann: Dawn Aiello, 800-498-2023 x2431; Dedham area: Ana Ferdaus, 800-563-8603 x4720.

FREE HIV TESTING
Women, Inc. offers free, anonymous HIV counseling and testing in a calm, unhurried atmosphere. Call for appt., or drop by any Tuesday between 4-6pm. Griffin House, 244 Townsend St., Dorchester. Info: 442-6166, x29.

LESBIANS WITH CANCER/ PARTNERS OF LESBIANS WITH CANCER
Ongoing support groups meet twice/mo. for lesbians with cancer (Tue, 5:15-6:45pm) and partners of lesbians with cancer (Wed, 7-8:30pm). Free. Fenway Community Health Center, 7 Haviland St., Bos. Info/to register: Liz , 927-6243.▼

SUBSTANCE ABUSE HELPLINE
The Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information , Education and Referral Helpline provides phone assistance 24 hours a day to those looking for help for themselves or someone else who is having an alcohol or drug abuse problem. 800-327-5050.

DANCE

BEST FOOT FORWARD
Swing and ballroom dance classes for lesbians, gays and bisexuals. Sunday evenings. No partner necessary. 185 Corey Rd., Brookline. For more info, call Sara Brodsky, 522-1444.

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE
Gender-role free; no partner needed. All dances taught; everyone welcome. 2nd & 4th Tue/mo., 7:30-10pm. $5 donation. First Church in JP, Centre & Eliot Sts., JP. Michael Cicone, 891-3296.

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE
Gender-role free; no partner needed. All dances taught; everyone welcome. 7:30pm. First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 630 Mass. Ave., Arlington. $5. Info, 781-648-3799 or Mary, 781-646-3445.

GAYS FOR PATSY
GLBT two-stepping in the Boston area with Gays for Patsy. Beginner lessons; no partner needed. For info about country/western dancing and other special events sponsored by Gays for Patsy: www.gfpinc.org or 781-446-3115.

SUBMISSIONS

CLAUDER COMPETITION
The Clauder Competition seeks new plays from New England playwrights, to be presented during Portland Stage Company's Little Festival of the Unexpected (2001) and receive full production during their 2001-02 Mainstage Season and $3,000 cash award. Deadline: September 1, 2000. For info: PO Box 383259, Cambridge, MA 02238. 781-322-3187.

DAUGHTERS OF SURVIVORS
Daughters of women who survived incest or sexual abuse are needed for a book project underway by a graduate student in the MFA program at Emerson College. All interviews will be confidential but will be part of a book on the longterm effects on the mother-daughter relationship. Info: crandall1962@aol.com.

HIV LOGO CONTEST
The Latina Women's Project is sponsoring a contest among the Greater Boston community to select three logos to be used in their prevention campaing focusing on women and HIV education. Deadline: June 9, 2000. Info, 350-6900 x107.

MY CHOICE/MY VOICE
Greater Boston National Organization for Women (NOW) is looking for women of all ages and backgrounds to share their stories about personal reproductive choices for an oral history of reproductive rights. Info, 232-4764.

NOTICES

AAC CAR CAMPAIGN
Turn your old car, truck or motorcycle into new hope for AIDS patients by donating your vehicle to the AIDS Action Committee. We'll pick it up for free and you'll receive a tax donation. Call 1-800-332-AUTO or email carcampaign@aac.org.

REAL ESTATE CONNECTION PROGRAM
Buying or selling real estate? Looking for a mortgage? Purchasing insurance? Hiring a moving company? Doing so through the Connection Program will direct valuable funding to the AIDS Action Committee. Info/brochure: Alliance Charitable Fund, 426-7000 or mail@alliancefund.org.

SOCIAL

BI-POC: BISEXUAL PEOPLE OF COLOR
Monthly social and support group for people of color of diverse ethnicities. All genders welcome. May 28: Movie Night with Maria Christina, Revere Beach, 6-8pm. Info, 424-9595.

GAY & LESBIAN SINGING GROUP
Informal singing group for gays and lesbians 30+ is starting in Camb/Som area. Info: Judy, 492-2340.▼

GIRLFRIENDS
Peer support group for lesbians and bisexual women of African Descent meets every Saturday, 10:30-12:30. Facilitated discussion in an informal and comfortable space. 929 Mass Ave., Camb. For info, 876-4210 x60 or e-mail *gfrnds@aol.com*.

GroupsEtc

▼Indicates gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual group

CENTERS

BIRD STREET COMMUNITY CENTER
A resident-run youth organization serving Uphams Corner & Dudley St. area. Programs & facilities include tutoring, game room, gym. 500 Columbia Rd., Dorchester. 282-6110.

CENTER FOR WOMEN & ENTERPRISE
Not-for-profit educational organization offering consulting, workshops, roundtables, courses, and a luncheon series. CWE assists women of all income levels in starting or expanding a business. 45 Bromfield St., Bos. 423-3001.

DORCHESTER COUNSELING CENTER
Offers a support group for lesbian and gay people, Fridays at noon. Diverse population. 622 Washington St., Dor. Info: Dr. Miriam Rosenberg or DeAnna Pedro, 282-1511.

EVERYWOMAN'S CENTER
Multi-service, multi-cultural women's center providing services and resources to university and community women. Wilder Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. 413-545-0883.

FENWAY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
Discussion group for lesbians considering parenting, 1st Tue/mo, 7-8:30pm; support group for women currently inseminating, 1st Thur/mo, 7-8:30pm; discussion group for lesbians and gay men considering adoption, 2nd Mon/mo, 7-8:30pm; Gay and Lesbian Family Day, 2nd Sat/mo; "Essence of a Woman" rap group for women having sex with women, 3rd Fri/mo., 6:30-8:30. 100 Mass. Ave., 3rd Floor, Bos. 267-7766. Gay and Lesbian Helpline: 267-9001 (TTY/voice), Mon-Fri, 4-11pm; Sat-Sun, 6-11pm. Peer Listening Line (youth only): 267-2535 (TTY/voice) or 1-800-399-PEER, Mon-Fri 4-10pm.

LIFESONG
Women's center for healing, creative expression, and community-building. 239 No. Franklin St., PO Box 401, Holbrook, MA 02343. For info: 767-1262.

LUCY PARSONS CENTER
Independent, radical education project working to agitate for real democracy, New South End location: 549 Columbus Ave., Bos. MBTA Orange Line/Mass Ave. stop or Green E-Line/ Symphony stop. Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm; Sun, noon-5pm. E-mail: lucyparsons@ tao.ca. Website: www.tao.ca/~lucyparsons/. Info, 267-6272.

NORTH SHORE WOMEN'S CENTER
Beverly, MA. 508-927-7306.

STONEWALL CENTER
A Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay & Transgender Educational Resource Center. University of Massachusetts, Campus Center 803, Amherst. 413-545-4824.

WOMEN'S CENTER
Mon: Battered Women's Support, 7:30pm. *Lesbian Rap, 7:30pm. Al-anon for Women, 6pm (6/5 & 6/19). Women's Healing Circle, 8pm (6/5, Brenda, 666-2876). ACT OUT - Revolutionary Young Sisters For Social Justice, 6pm (6/5 & 19; Lynn, 436-0390). Women of Color Reading Circle, 7pm (6/12; *Garden In The Dunes* by Leslie Silko; Vanessa, 629-2113). Lesbian Partners & Ex-partners of Incest Survivors, 7pm (6/19; Daniella, 497-0911).
Tues: Separation and Divorce Support Group, 7pm. *Bisexual Women's Rap, 7:30pm (6/6 & 20). Writers' Circle, 7pm (6/13; newcomers welcome; Cassandra, 494-2695). Assessing Your Therapy and Getting What You Want From It, 7:30pm (6/13, offered by therapist Vera Cohen). Women's Reading Group, 7:30pm (6/27; *The Severed Head* by Iris Murdoch; Mary, 781-891-5727).
Wed: Lesbian Al-Anon, 6:30pm. *Women Maximizing Abilities Now, 2pm (6/7 & 21; info: 945-1447; email: woman@braintrust.org). Battered Women's Support, 7pm (6/7, 14, & 28). Women of Color Rap, 7pm (6/7; Lynn, 436-0390). Finding & Getting the Job You Want, 7pm (6/14). Psyche Trope: Peer Support for Women taking Psychotropic Medications, 6:30pm (6/14 & 28). *Women over 40, 7pm (6/14 & 28; Suzanne, 781-393-4854). Story Telling/Playback Theater, 7pm (6/21; Kaeza, 781-395-8616). Transitioning Out of the Patient Role, 6pm (ongoing facilitated group, open to newcomers 6/21; info: 354-8807 or Diane 781-226-7097).
Thurs: 30+ Lesbian Rap, 7pm. Thursday Night Gathering for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, 7:30pm. Support-4-Us, 6pm (6/1, 15, & 29; new peer support group for women with anxiety/panic and/or obsessive compulsive disorder). *Women's Community Cancer Project, 7pm (6/1; info: 354-9888). Women's Radical Action Group (WRAG), 6pm (6/1 & 15; info: Ivanna 562-8150). A-CASA (Against Child and Sexual Abuse), 6pm (6/8; info: Ellen, 776-7592). *Films for Thought, 7pm (6/15: *Boys Don't Cry*; light refreshments).
Fri: *Incest Survivors Anonymous (ISA), 6:30pm. Incest Resources Facilitated Open Discussion For Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, 6pm (6/30; facilitated by survivor/therapists).
Sat: *Open Discussion on Coming Out for Women of All Ages, 11am (6/3). Women Writing, 12:30pm (6/3 & 17). Intermediate ESL, 2pm (6/3 & 17; new group in conversational English). Survivors' Health & Health Care, 11:30am (6/10; email: survivorhealth@chickmail.com). *Stop Smoking Naturally With Hypnosis, 11:30am (6/10; with therapist Jean Fain). Trauma Survivors' Group, 1:30pm (6/3 & 6/17; open facilitated group).
Weekday daytime group: NTHTS (Nothing Too Heavy to Share) group (for survivors of severe abuse such as battering, torture, mind control, forced deprivation & isolation; info/to join: Esther, 969-9347).
September Group Registration: Exploring Issues of Self-esteem and Assertiveness is a 10-week, facilitated group for women in their 30's & 40's beginning in September. Registration is required. If interested, call Holly, 216-8183.
All groups are free.
The Women's Center is open to all women & their children, Mon-Thurs, 10am-10pm; Fri., 10am-8pm; Sat., 11am-4pm. 46 Pleasant Street (5 blocks from Central Square), Cambridge. 354-8807 (TTY & voice). *Wheelchair accessible meetings.

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FAMILY EMPOWERMENT
The Elizabeth Stone House offers a program for families struggling with emotional upheaval, whether due to violence, involuntary separation, mental health issues, or substance abuse. English & Spanish. Info: Robin Weingarten, 497-9801 x409.

HEALING MOTIONS
Therapeutic movement program connecting body and feelings for women survivors of sexual abuse. Co-led by two survivors. Mondays, 6pm, Central Sq. location, Camb. 547-2046.

The Planets, the Planet, and *You*

By Miz Saturn, the only marxist-feminist astrologer this side of the Volga

June brings us more of the global upheaval that I see peaking in May, but with some slightly different twists. Keep in mind that June is really the last month of the intense Saturn-Uranus square that this astrologer has been ranting about. By the end of the month, the square's influence will be weaker than it's been in months, and it continues to weaken over the summer. However, June is still a time of turbulence for many people. Jupiter and Saturn continue their march through Taurus in close conjunction: I see this as a stabilizing influence, which then runs smack into the tumultuous energy of Uranus. The result? Stress and disruption feel more intolerable than usual. (Of course, there will be some interesting political events during this Saturn-Jupiter-Uranus period. Scandals surrounding Boston's "Big Dig" seem particularly fitting for a planetary combination that rules the earth, excavation, and money pits!) For me, the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction is a good excuse to stay home, stay put, and like Nicole Hollander's Sylvia, preside from the bed or the bathtub.

You will all be thrilled to know that June 23 brings us Mercury retrograde. Haven't you been missing the influence of some quirky, unpredictable retrograde planet? I have. Things have just been a bit too straightforward! Mercury will be retrograding in Cancer from June 23 until July 17, this time bringing internal emotional processes to the fore. We will all feel thin-skinned. It seems appropriate to welcome the summer solstice and the sun's shortening days with a retrograde period, forcing us to turn inward.

Gemini (May 22-June 21) The New Moon in Gemini on June 2 gives a good start to your month: use it to get some guidance about what is really important to you. Venus and Mars in Gemini—making some nice angles to Uranus and Neptune—will facilitate your work, your creative expression, and even romance. Saturn and Jupiter in Taurus are stabilizing and will help you get things done, or at least, will help you worry less if things aren't done the way you like them! This month continues the theme of change that has been with you for a few months, and now you're closer to understanding what the meaning is. Don't overdo it—you'll have plenty of time to take the world by storm in the fall when Jupiter and Saturn pass into Gemini. Take advantage of this Taurus energy by enjoying what you have.

Cancer (June 22-July 21) We're heading into your time of year, when Cancer energy dominates. Mercury enters Cancer on May 31 and Mars on June 17, followed quickly by Venus on June 19. All these planets in Cancer will make the Saturn-Jupiter conjunction in Taurus even more comfortable. So although the first half of the month may feel a bit discordant to you—with Gemini and Aquarian energy pulling you off center—by the middle of the month, it will be Cancerian clarity that we'll all need to help us understand the world around us. Cancer is a watery energy, and there is nothing more clear than, for example, the crystalline waters of the tropics, where one can see through to the ocean floor. That's you, baby: seeing through all the artifice and confusion to the real meaning of things. This quality will be particularly evident when Mercury goes retrograde on June 23.

Leo (July 22-August 21) The first half of the month will proceed swimmingly for you, between Mars and Venus in Gemini and the opportunities presented to you by Saturn and Jupiter. Okay, throw in continued stress from Uranus. But then in the middle of the month—when Mars and Venus enter Cancer on June 17 and 19 respectively, and Mercury retrogrades in Cancer on June 23—you'll be stymied by your own emotional backlogs and everyone else's. There is not a damn thing you can do. Just listen and process, or go away on vacation.

Virgo (August 22-September 21) The Gemini emphasis of the first half of June serves you well in the communication and creativity department, with fun romantic possibilities the week of June 12. Saturn and Jupiter in Taurus are comforting, and you may be pulled to make some highly practical decisions about resources—emotional or material ones. Make your decisions before June 23, however, since Mercury retrograde is always a time for sitting and watching new information turn up. It is not a time for decision-making! Sit tight from June 23 until July 17, even though June will offer up many temptations for you.

Libra (September 22-October 21) June lightens the load you felt during May's concentration of Taurean influences. Mars and

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OPENING AND KEYNOTE:
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KEYNOTE **Lani Guinier**, author of acclaimed works on civil rights, democratic theory, and women and the law.

PLENARY TOPICS AND CONFIRMED SPEAKERS

Thursday June 15, 1:30p.m.
AGENDA FOR FEMINIST EDUCATION: LINKING ACADEMY AND COMMUNITY IN 2000 AND BEYOND
Lourdes Beneria, Margo Okazawa-Rey and Connie Panzarino

Friday June 16, 3:30p.m.
FEMINIST ACTION AND INTELLECT: SUBVERTING THE GENDERED POLITICS OF WAR AND PEACE
Sponsered by the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies at Radcliffe College
Elise Boulding, Valentine Moghadam, Radha Kumar and Betty Burkes

Sunday June 18, 10:00a.m.
TRANSFORMATIONS: FEMINIST / WOMANIST / QUEER...STUDIES - WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
Paula Gunn Allen, Lisa Duggan andBarbara McCaskill

Other outstanding features include sessions sponsered by NWSA Caucuses, Task Forces, and Interest Groups. The Lesbian Caucus had organized the Dana Shugar Lesbian Studies Institute to be held all day Saturday, June 17th. On the same day there will be a Professional Development/Continuing Education Institute on "Violence in School/Violence in Schooling."

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Venus in Gemini will make life feel downright breezy! Enjoy your friends and making new connections. Romantic possibilities emerge during the week of June 12. Jupiter and Saturn, however, continue their conjunction in Taurus, which may make you reconsider commitments you're making. Go slowly, and don't make any decisions once Mercury goes retrograde on June 23. The second half of the month brings us a number of planets in Cancer, which is a more comfortable sign for you than what the zodiac has been offering up lately. You'll gain great insights during this upcoming Mercury retrograde period: really keep track of your dreams and emotional processes.

Scorpio (October 22-November 21) The Taurean influences of April and May wane a bit during June, except for the big guns of Saturn and Jupiter, still squaring Uranus and making for lots of crisis in your life. Hopefully you used May to rest and stay in bed, and also to spend time alone, recouping some of your core vitality. The first half of June brings Mars and Venus in Gemini, which will make you feel like you can't get a grip on things—can't get your laundry done and your desk is more overwhelmingly messy than usual. Try to pay attention to the big things, however, even if they're hard to think about. The Saturn-Jupiter conjunction is presenting questions to you about what is really important in your life. Learn from this important combination. Then during the second half of June, the advent of planets in Cancer will calm you down quite a bit. Use this Mercury retrograde period for reflection, for learning, for letting yourself be taken care of.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) Use the new moon on June 2 to reflect on yourself and the directions you're contemplating. It's a new moon in which to focus on your values: that is the meaning of the concentrated Taurean energy for you. It is also a time for you to let your values translate into wisdom, which is a wonderful quality of Sagittarius. Although you should enjoy the Gemini energy of the first half of the month, stay grounded and do not take on more than you can handle—you know you think your energy has no limits! Keep in mind that Mercury goes retrograde in Cancer on June 23: you will only be frustrated unless you absolutely go with the flow!

Capricorn (December 22-January 20) April and May helped you stay grounded through the Saturn-Uranus tumult, and you also have accomplished a lot in the past month. You'll be disappointed to feel some planets moving into Gemini, a sign that can be highly annoying to you, making you feel like there are too many details pulling you off track. But don't worry, by the middle of June, Venus and Mars will join Mercury in your opposite sign of Cancer, making you feel more comfortable. Expect Mercury retrograde (which begins on June 23) to bring you emotional understandings that will soften up your currently crusty exterior.

Aquarius (January 20-February 20) The new moon in Gemini on June 2 is a good time for you to sit still and figure out how to take care of yourself. Reflect on relationships—what you've been getting and what you've been forgetting to attend to. Then take advantage of the first half of June to relax and not push yourself so hard. When Mars and Venus catch up to Mercury in Cancer and then Mercury immediately goes retrograde, you won't know what hit you. At that point you'll be forced to slow down. You'll handle the Cancer period better if you take care of yourself and your relationships during June. Use Mercury retrograde to track your dreams and emotional inner workings.

Pisces (February 20-March 19) Use the first half of June to hang out with friends, and in the spirit of camaraderie, to get some social change work done. But make sure you have fun! When Mars and Venus enter Cancer on June 17 and 19, you must, you must, tend to your own emotional needs rather than others'. Use Mercury retrograde beginning on June 23 as a time for emotional leadership—you don't realize how many things you know or how important and useful they are. Be sure to spend time at the ocean.

Aries (March 20-April 19) There is no way around it—June will be very, very odd for you. On the one hand, you'll be working hard and getting lots done. On the other hand, Mars and Venus in Gemini will make you want to go to stupid movies and hang out with friends. Then comes Mercury retrograde on June 23, and you'll have to give up any semblance of control over anything. Watch your impulsiveness and impatience during the second half of June—it could wreak havoc with friends, lovers, and colleagues. Pay attention to your dreams.

Taurus (April 20-May 21) Saturn and Jupiter continue their close conjunction in your own sign for the entire month. There is no combination more beneficent and grounded, stabilizing and expansive—and more likely to tempt you to real estate rashness—than this one! Seriously, it is completely about investing your energy, on all levels. This means that you are facing very important questions about where your emotional, spiritual, political, and creative energies are going. Once Mercury goes retrograde on June 23, you should avoid big decisions about these big questions. Use the three weeks of Mercury retrograding in Cancer to sit with yourself, your garden, and your journals (I know you have several!) And see what comes up.

Miz Saturn has been an astrologer for 25 years, practicing her own idiosyncratic brand of lesbian/ feminist/ uranian astrology. Do you have a question for Miz Saturn you'd like answered in the pages of Sojourner? *Write to "Ask Miz Saturn,"* Sojourner, *42 Seaverns Avenue, Boston, MA 02130. Or e-mail: miz-saturn@sojourner.org*

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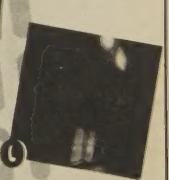

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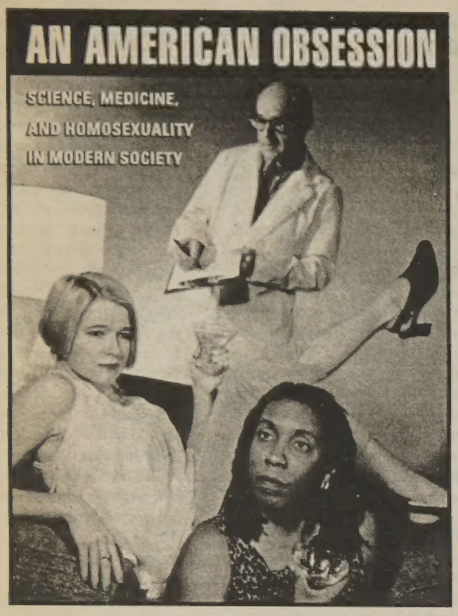

Science, Cultural Anxiety, & Homosexuality

Jennifer Terry argues that scientific discourses on homosexuality expose American cultural anxieties about gender and desire, hygiene, bodily pleasures, family life, race relations and democracy.

AN AMERICAN OBSESSION: SCIENCE, MEDICINE, AND HOMOSEXUALITY IN MODERN SOCIETY

By Jennifer Terry
University of Chicago Press, 1999, $20

Reviewed by Natalie W. Josef

I hate going to the doctor's office. I hate waiting. I hate being shuffled in and out of there like I'm on an assembly line. But probably the most distressing part of the whole trip is when the nurse asks me if I am sexually active. I always turn red and mutter something that he or she interprets as a "yes." That question is always followed by this one: "Is there any chance that you are pregnant?" I look the nurse in the eye and say "no." Then the nurse asks me what contraceptive devices I use. I want to laugh because we both know that I am one of the dykiest looking dykes imaginable, and that my contraceptive device is the most effective one yet. But I always say, "I don't sleep with men." Obviously flustered, the nurse bends her or his head down, furtively trying to locate the box to check for "dyke," or "sleeps with women," but inevitably ends up writing a statement in the margin.

The message is clear: my existence and my "lifestyle" occupy the blank space in the margins of forms designed for all the "normal" women who sleep with men and use birth control. How did this come to be true? How is it that certain boxes appear on the form but not others? Jennifer Terry's new book, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society*, explores the contours of the historical relationship between "the love that dare not speak its name" and the scientists, doctors, and psychiatrists who diagnosed it, pathologized it, defined it, and sometimes attempted to defend it.

Terry's broad goal is to "show how scientific and medical discourses on homosexuality expose certain aspects of modern American culture, especially . . . anxieties about gender and desire, as well as about hygiene, bodily pleasures, population management, family life, race relations and democratic governing." Terry provides a compelling framework for her argument: she asserts that homosexuality has served as a marker of the "abnormal," against which conceptualizations of the "normal" have been defined. In other words, a lesbian or gay box does not have to appear on forms because it is implied. And without the implied queer box, there would not even be a normal box. The queer box doesn't appear precisely because we are supposed to believe that the normal box is the only one possible—it's natural. Drawing on a range of sources—including medical texts, legal documents, psychiatric case histories, sociological studies, and journalistic prose—Terry offers a rich and nuanced account of homosexuality in American history.

An American Obsession challenges the notion of the ideal scientist, free from bias or cultural influence, sitting in his or her lab, informing society of the truths discovered about sex, gender, bodies, desire, etc. Rather, Terry exposes the cultural and political baggage scientists carry, demonstrating that culture and science are always intertwined in the production of knowledge. One of Terry's accomplishments in this study is her refusal to characterize scientists as having the only voice in the process of defining sexual deviancy and sexual normalcy. She skillfully documents the agency of gay men, lesbians, and other sexual minorities in this process by illustrating some of the ways they co-authored, resisted, and often transformed the ways their sexuality was conceptualized by doctors, scientists, and others. Terry disrupts the notion that science is an all-powerful entity out to demonize all gender and sexual transgressors. Instead, she shows that scientists often worked with lesbians and gay men to advance particular theories of homosexuality.

An American Obsession begins with a careful consideration of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century views of homosexuality. Terry's rigorous analysis of the work of sexologists Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis, and Magnus Hirschfeld shows that modern thinking about homosexuality has always converged with and been shaped by thinking about other key social and cultural concerns like gender, race, and class. She discusses the various motives of these sexologists for studying homosexuality and considers how their theories intersected with contemporary social concerns. Hirschfeld, for example, was a homosexual who sought social acceptance for himself and other homosexuals. But, he was also an ardent supporter of eugenics. Today this would seem contradictory; but Terry places the sexologists within the zeitgeist of nineteenth-century values and morals which helps us understand their complex positioning.

In another example, Terry explains that because

Continued on page 48

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Women Who Love Sex Are Not Born, But Create Ourselves

Women Who Love Sex: An Inquiry into the Expanding Spirit of Women's Erotic Experience

By Gina Ogden
Womanspirit Press, 1999, $12.95

Reviewed by Karen Bullock-Jordan

Part documentary, part spiritual treatise, part philosophical inquiry, *Women Who Love Sex* is a road map for becoming a whole sexual being. Author Gina Ogden, a feminist sex therapist, does not dwell on the victimization of women, but instead tries to pinpoint how sex is experienced from the viewpoint of self-identified "women who love sex."

Ogden takes apart male-oriented medical sexual theory—which tends to cast women as selfless drones for male pleasure—and replaces it with a model where women's voices and experiences are front and center. She spends time asking the big questions: What is sex? What is orgasm? How do we create our own internal erotic imagery? The answers come through Ogden's recreation of women's sexual stories, complete with drawings and graphics. One of my favorites is Ogden's revised sexual response cycle, featuring "the ongoing continuum of pleasure, orgasm, and ecstasy"—a direct challenge to the conventional sexual response cycle, which "peak[s] at orgasm, then run[s] out of energy."

Despite my appreciation of Ogden's efforts to overturn such sexual conventions, I also bristled at her own fairly heavy use of generalizations about *women*, many of which felt rooted in what I would call cultural feminism. These include the beliefs that women need emotional connection in order to enjoy sex, that they need tenderness and concern, and that women more often enjoy skin contact and comfort than orgasm. At times, I felt like I had opened a "women's erotica" magazine full of endless pictures of the seashore. But after a while, I stopped and reflected on the connections between emotions and sex in my life. I've enjoyed sexual acts with strangers, semi-strangers, and friends—in fact there was a point when I'd been sexual with almost everyone in my larger social circle. While all of those experiences meant something to me, I always came out of my "peak sexual experiences" with a close bond with my partner (or partners), sometimes created during the sexual experience, sometimes strengthened by it (in the case of friends). I realized that it is true for me—a self-confirmed and loud "tramp"—that good sex, great sex, involves more than just my body; it involves my mind and soul. Even though I may not relate to some of the language Ogden uses to describe it, I'd have to say that her articulation of the emotional experiences of women who love sex does apply to me. And I would definitely recommend this book to any woman who wants to be comfortable with her sexuality.

Each chapter of the book centers on a particular woman's story. With the exception of Ogden's own story, which begins the book, each woman depicted is actually a composite of women Ogden has treated, interviewed, or talked to. Alice is a former client, a woman married to a man whom she loves, but with whom the sex is unsatisfying, to put it mildly. She has come to believe that her dissatisfaction is her own

NEW AND REVISED FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
with a foreword by the authors of
Our Bodies, Ourselves
Women Who Love Sex
An Inquiry into the Expanding Spirit of Women's Erotic Experience

fault, since sex therapy has been no help. Then follow the stories of Maya, a crone who declares herself a "trisexual"; Iris and her cohorts, a group of "easily orgasmic" women; Dr. Suzanne, a woman who can think herself to orgasm; Molly, a sexual nurturer; and Rosa, a former "sex addict" and widow who speaks of her journey to intimacy.

The book ends with "A Reflection on Self, Spirit, and Social Change," where Ogden places her research for this book squarely in the context of national events and attitudes in the realm of sexuality. She began the research for this book in the '70s, the era of the "so-called sexual revolution," a time when women were increasingly experimenting with sexuality and fighting for sexual freedom. However far we might argue that women have come in the economic and political realms since that time, Ogden asks, "[H]as the picture really changed for women? . . . On the eve of the twenty-first century, we still live in a world in which it is a radical notion to ask for equal

Continued on next page

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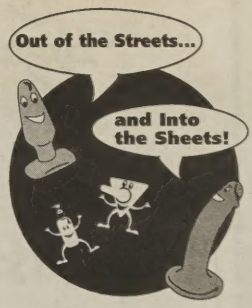

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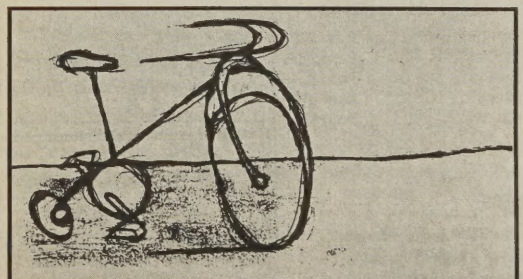

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Women Who Love Sex

Continued from page 45

time, especially in bed."

Ogden also offers a fascinating afterword, which describes her own horrified reaction to the cover of the initial edition of *Women Who Love Sex*. In case you did not catch the book when it first came out in 1994, the cover is a fine example of mainstream exploitation of women's sexuality. Remember the ads for that middle-aged male porn flick *American Beauty*? Take that and mix in the worst of any romance novel cover. Picture the title, embossed in a garish pink script across the front. It was enough to make you wanna yak, and it was also diametrically opposed to the content. (The current edition of *Women Who Love Sex* is self-published by Ogden's own Womanspirit press and has a new cover.)

The afterword also includes a reprint of an article Ogden wrote for *Ms. Magazine* entitled "Media Interruptus, Confronting Sexual Politics on the Book Tour Circuit," which describes the sometimes covert, sometimes overt, sexism and defensiveness exhibited by male interviewers on her original book tour. One radio host in Missouri encouraged callers to tell her to go back to Massachusetts "where [she] could just burn at the stake—like them other witches." Here in Boston, in the middle of a radio conversation about gender roles, a technician cut in the orgasm sounds from *When Harry Met Sally*. The most overt and frightening display came from another radio interviewer. After tossing out sly and sarcastic sexist comments, the interviewer finally started yelling at Ogden on the air. She writes,

It was only a few moments before he slipped into frenzy-faced, neck-bulging rage. He bellowed into his mike "You can't come on my station with your secret feminist agenda!"
"It's not a secret," I said.

Ogden deserves much credit for how she handled the rest of his tirade. As he continued yelling, she leaned close into her mike and began talking to the audience:

For you women out there listening, this is important for you to hear. This is what abuse sounds like. When you try to take control of your sexuality—when you say what you want, or ask a guy to wear a condom so you can be safe—you may get the same kind of reaction you're hearing right now . . . .

Just as Ogden has to interrupt the powers that be to make herself heard and take back the airwaves, so the women she writes about take a stand to reclaim their own sexual power and pleasure. Her approach, which involves using several women's stories to create composite characters who illustrate various issues—has its pluses and minuses. On the one hand, she reaffirms how many women suffer in similar ways as a result of patriarchal oppression—how so much of what we think we know about sex comes through a male lens and often can't please or satisfy or nurture women. Many readers will probably identify with Alice, for example, who details how her whole sense of what sex is supposed to be has been fostered by the men in her life: "All of my life men have been saying: 'This is the right way. Hurry up. You're on the wrong track.'"

Yet, particularly at the end of the chapters, the "conversations" between Ogden and her composite interviewees can sound forced. The transparency of the device often comes through as Ogden tries to get her last points in before the close of a section.

Nevertheless, Ogden does make many critical points. For one, she notes that women who love sex are not born, but create themselves. Many of the women she talks about have had to consciously make the effort to enjoy sex. Some have had histories of abuse or been raped, or have simply experienced horrible sex. All have worked—with or without the help of therapy—to be able to let go and enjoy their sex lives. However, it does seem that those women who can come from non-genital stimulation or without physical stimulation of any kind are just wired that way (lucky bastards!).

I was also pleasantly surprised by Ogden's (brief) treatment of SM. As an SM feminist, whenever I read a book about women's sexuality written by a feminist (unless she is another out SM feminist), I'm always secretly cringing, or smugly waiting for her to say something reactionary about SM—and I'm usually not disappointed. Ogden, however, seems to have really listened to SM women describe why they do what they do and what they get out of it. She has done a lot more than simply parrot back what these women have told her. In a discussion with Maya and her nieces, Ogden offers up this particular gem:

Perhaps most important, to make S/M work (that is, to make the orgasms fun for both partners), there has to be upfront communication about the power roles . . . [S/M is] taking yourself beyond the comfort zone, expanding the sexual limits you impose on yourself. . . . [I]t's learning to negotiate for pleasure and safety. . . . Clearly it involves learning to know the difference between not enough and too much. Learning to know what enough means. Perhaps the ecstasy connection is always teetering in that delicate balance between pain and pleasure.

As a black woman, I also hunger for books on sexuality that will incorporate the voices of women of color, that will take into account how our race and class impact our sexuality and our struggles to take control of our sexuality. While reading *Women Who Love Sex*, I found myself asking out loud, repeatedly, "When does she talk about women of color?" At the end of Alice's story, Ogden does acknowledge that women of color have different tales to tell:

Each woman's story is special. There are details of Alice's story that would be dramatically different . . . were [she] Jewish or African-American or Latina or Asian or Native American with another set of culture-bred rules about her role in his life.

This was not enough for me, and left me with that familiar feeling that the experiences of women of color were not taken into account. Rosa's story left an especially bad taste in my mouth. The only identifiable non-white woman in the book, she is also the only one who was wildly promiscuous, out of control, and overtly self-destructive.

Problems notwithstanding, Ogden's book is critical. In these strange times, when women's sexuality is either ignored, examined solely through a victimization lens, or medicalized, *Women Who Love Sex* is unique, a work by a therapist and feminist that dwells on the pleasure to be found in sex for women. One can only hope that the book will have a wide audience—of doctors, other therapists, and any woman trying to understand herself.

Karen Bullock-Jordan is a woman who flat out LOVES sex!

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Puzzling Polemic

Continued from page 52

sex and keep people from having sex; the effect of capitalism on gender roles and the erasure of married women as "legal citizens;" as well as the use of punishment to mandate conformity to heterosexual, procreative, marital sex codes—should at least raise a question about how feminism has helped reshape marriage, family, and the workplace to make it a tad more amenable to women's well-being. Instead, Graff seems to view feminist critique as a cranky obstacle to her efforts to make a clear-cut case for her marriage to Madeline. Her unreconstructed view of the merits of marriage seems strangely out of sync with the average woman who still knows it's a man's world. In addition, her vision implicitly maintains the view, despite the evidence to the contrary, that marriage is the only acceptable form of family recognition. She does not account for why she would shove domestic partnership, civil unions, or other family forms off the main stage.

Third, even as feminist critiques of marriage make the beeline to the altar more complicated, it is disappointing that the book did not frame a larger vision for how same-sex marriage would be a social good. There are, after all, feminist pro-marriage arguments to make. Women are, in fact, our strongest allies for social justice in this realm. They are also the most skeptical of anything that might re-invigorate past use of marriage as a means of social control.

So, that's the big picture. Now, on to Graff's detailed history of this ever-changing institution.

She tells us that money, not love, heads the list as the most central purpose for marriage. Graff outlines both the economic component of marriage as well as the effect of changing economies on gender roles within marriage. Generally speaking, medieval and pre-modern Western economies were built around the family business or farm, rather than the wage labor of the later centuries. Because there was little separation between home and work, both husband and wife worked and raised the children. At very early ages, children became working, productive members of the family. A "good marriage" between a man with an inheritance and a woman with a reasonable dowry was as important to one's future as a good education is today.

Nineteenth-century capitalism transformed this purpose for marriage by its need for wage labor, ushering in the much more recognizable family roles of men being banished from the home to work while women were relegated to the home. Married women's legal status was erased and a new occupational category entered the world in the 1850 British census—housewife. Children, having lost their productive role in the family, were now in need of mothering. Marriage became the vehicle through which we understood gender roles for the middle class. Men worked outside the home and usually married. Good girls married and stayed out of men's public sphere. In the twentieth century, once again economic shifts occurred as women demanded the same wage opportunities provided to men. As middle-class women became more economically independent, their ability to bargain for more equality within marriage increased as well, leading to broad based legal and social reforms still in the works today.

Sex, of course, is more than a bit player in marriage history. The "Sex" chapter is in large part the history of religion and marriage. The tensions and battles for public sexual norms—between the Roman aristocratic use of sex as power; Augustinian professions that the state of nature is celibate; Protestant reformers who re-fashioned natural law theory to mandate sex within marriage; and Jewish theology, which was comparatively sex-positive—have the plot potential of the best John Grisham novel. Add to the mix nation-states that wrested control of the moral lives of their subjects from the church and we see why we have never solved the chicken and egg mystery of which parts of marriage are religious and which are civil.

In the end, we find, not surprisingly, that marriage is the means by which sex is regulated, a premise that Graff, disappointingly, seems to embrace. She voices what seems to be her personal conclusion that the purpose of marriage is "the close companionship and sexual pleasure of the pair" without addressing recent history that has all but legitimated sex without marriage. Intoning only the Supreme Court's decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (supporting contraception and sexual intimacy for married couples), she inexplicably ignores *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, which two years later acknowledged the right of contraception and sexual intimacy for unmarried people. Could it be that she does not see sexuality as a freedom beyond government control?

Graff resorts to rightwing "cultural elite" rhetoric: she casts feminist and gay people who have critiqued sexual norms and marriage as "queer theorists" who only want to live a "bacchanalian" lifestyle.

Intertwined with (heterosexual) sex is procreation. Graff aptly titles this discussion "Babies," thereby incorporating child rearing, in addition to simply creating babies, into the purpose for marriage. She necessarily departs from marriage, per se, to run through the history of family and parent-child relationships. The Romans viewed anyone living under one roof to be a family (labor made a family). Aristocratic men created the legal concepts of legitimacy and illegitimacy to protect their property interests (and their sexual promiscuity). The law came to recognize the natural rights of husbands to the productive labor of the children coming from their wives' wombs, an ownership interest on the same continuum as slaveholders' ownership of their slaves and their slaves' children. Graff's insight is at its best in her cogent response to current fathers' rights advocates, the most conservative of whom argue that social science research shows that children must have a (married) father in the household to keep them from developing into juvenile delinquents. She points out the obvious flaws in their arguments and provides essential "talking points" for anyone engaging in the current national discourse around so-called fathers' rights.

Kinship ties between families serve as another purpose for marriage. Marriage historically has united families within tribes, religions, and social strata, ensuring that money and power are contained among the few. Families tended to unite with other "equals," which gives another context for bans against interracial marriage. In addition to "stick within the tribe" and White Supremacy rationales, miscegenation laws promoted the message that people of color were not social or legal equals to whites. The Catholic Church tried to break apart the family or tribal hoarding of resources (and potential power against the church, no doubt) by adopting a series of incest laws to ban marriage within certain degrees of bloodlines, at one point prohibiting marriage within nine degrees of consanguinity—making it virtually impossible for a person from a small village who never traveled more than three miles to marry. The purported goal was to create a more open society. One suspects the real goal was to broaden the church's reach to "pagan" tribes and secure its power in the world. The point, though, is that the origin of incest laws has nothing to do with genetics. Graff uses the "Kin" chapter to present thumbnail histories of other attempts to expand notions of kinship. These include polygamy (a system created for men to exponentially enhance their numbers of offspring) and utopian societies, whose usually nonmonogamous, communal living situations attempted to broaden individual commitments beyond the confines of family defined through marriage.

Marriage, Graff claims in the chapter entitled "Order," provides a much needed means of social and political organization to family relationships. She vividly recounts the social and economic difficulties inherent in a marriage system that is purely private. Until about the sixteenth century, marriages were created by families either by contract or declaration. So prevalent was the private domain of marriage that a promise made between lovers was considered to have a binding effect even if it thwarted two fathers' carefully planned merger of their children. In 1215, the Catholic Church decreed a private promise to marry to be a sacrament, created canon laws to define it, and set up ecclesiastical courts to enforce it. With the church's typically Catholic hair-splitting distinction between a present promise of marriage and a future promise of marriage, chaos ensued. No one knew whether they were married. For many, it took years of ecclesiastical litigation to get the church's ruling about whether a marriage existed or not. This murkiness led the church eventually to require that marriage vows be witnessed.

By the sixteenth century, marriage was handed over to emerging nation-states, making marriage for the first time a public institution conferred by a secular authority. States enthusiastically took power over marriage, using it to establish systems of social inequalities (the Prussian states forbade blind and disabled people from marrying) or to bring down the old order, as French revolutionaries did by requiring a civil ceremony and registration governed by the state.

It is in these "Order" and "Kin" chapters that the book takes its troubling turns. Out of the blue, Graff angrily denounces presumed feminist and gay colleagues who have dared to publicly critique the institution of marriage or to promote alternative avenues in law and policy for recognizing family relationships. She resorts to rightwing "cultural elite" rhetoric by casting those with a critique of sexual norms and the laws that mandate them as "professors," "bohemians," and "queer theorists." These critics of the dominant culture's use of marriage to personify cultural (and legal) norms—norms which have contributed to homophobia and the destructiveness of the closet for generations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people—are "promiscuous" and only want to live a "bacchanalian" lifestyle. They are diametrically opposed to Graff's real lesbian and gay "hearth and home" couples.

In addition to this unexpected polemic, she belittles the important progress of the last twenty years, in which coalitions of feminists, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender advocates, senior and youth advocates, parents, and others have challenged the exclusivity of the marriage relationship as the access point to important economic and social benefits. (Why is it that only married people can visit their partners in hospital ICU units?) In a legal and cultural context of equal pay for equal work (and one in which the United States stands as one of the only Western societies without state-provided healthcare), what is the justification for employers offering health care, bereavement leave, and family sick leave only to their married employees? Why should only married people be able to adopt a partner's child? What interest does the government have in protecting only the property interests and agreements of married couples, but not those of unmarried couples?

Graff spent untold hours researching medieval history, but apparently spent no time researching her own communities' history and contributions to the society that currently exists. Even more perplexing, she wrongly and inaccurately casts domestic partnership as a "back-of-the-bus" solution (tell that to a lesbian who is able to pay for her cancer treatments thanks to her partner's employer), and dismisses as "demi-marriage" any means of recognizing a family relationship that is not marriage. Has anyone told her that perhaps the whole point of some of our advocacy is to address the complexities of modern family life and to allow for tax dollars to be spread to those who love and care for each other whether or not they are excluded from marriage—or for any one of a dozen reasons (goddess forbid) choose not to marry? Does Graff not know that lots of social forces are currently in play to reconfigure family structures so that they are not so exclusively defined by marriage and biology? Even the United States Census has started counting "unmarried partners." Seems rather odd for her to paddle against this stream of historical development just to make her arguments for marriage.

In the end, Graff argues that the current, perhaps only, purpose for marriage is love. In modern society, she says, love serves as the overarching reason that people get married. Loss of love serves as the overarching reason why people divorce. And, insofar as love knows no sexual orientation, gender, or race, a same-sex couple is now as entitled as anyone else to access state marriage laws. She does not quite answer, though, why love and care giving must only be supported for people who are married, or why love would ever be the province of civil law.

I sure wish that Ms. Graff had let her tremendously useful compilation of history simply speak for itself. I really wish she had found another vehicle for venting her frustration with colleagues, ideas, and strategies that differ from her own. We so need a simple, accessible book for all public officials and advocates engaged in the question of same-sex marriage—a book that grounds our movement for family recognition in an historical context. However, this book's secondary message that any family form other than marriage is inferior is simply too destructive to the progress made thus far to recommend circulating it beyond immediate family.

Paula Ettelbrick is family policy director for the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Sexual Obsession

Continued from page 44

some experts viewed homosexuals as "arrested" in the otherwise normal course of heterosexual development, they thought that homosexuals ought to be pitied and treated, rather than punished. But understandings of economic and social class differences affected the recommended prescriptions. Kraft-Ebing, for example, thought that middle-class homosexuals ought to be pitied, but that lower-class homosexuals ought to be penalized. And yet again, other scientists thought that lower class homosexuals deserved society's sympathy because they simply didn't know any better—after all, they were biologically inferior. "Scientific facts about homosexuality . . .," Terry writes, "like all scientific facts, . . . made sense to their authors and audiences and were intelligible within the cultural and historical framework of their origin."

In one particularly fascinating section of the book, Terry documents in great detail the work of the Committee for the Study of Sex Variants. In the 1930s in New York City, the committee conducted an interdisciplinary study in which homosexuals served as willing subjects. Although the experts often continued to pathologize them, the homosexual subjects who participated in the study did so in hopes of gaining some measure of social legitimacy. What subjects and experts shared—if for different reasons—was the desire to decriminalize homosexuality.

Terry points out that many gay and lesbian scientists, psychologists, and sociologists worked on this study. These researchers were uniquely positioned to solicit subjects for the study from their own communities. In the end, however, the study "implied that heterosexuality was neither a natural nor guaranteed system but an endangered cultural institution requiring the commitment and effort of individuals and families, and the ongoing intervention of scientific experts."

Homosexuals were compared to communists as "part of a strategy to underscore that homosexuals were fundamentally disloyal to the nation rather than merely errant in their behavior."

In her discussion of the committee, one of Terry's central purposes is to demonstrate that racial and class ideologies were crucial to the construction of the meaning of homosexuality, sex, and gender. For example, Terry explains that one "expert" on the committee asserted that an African American lesbian's "rapport with other women" could be taken as "typical of many homosexual negro women," by which he meant that she was "hypersexual and masculine by nature." Even though all homosexuals were thought to be lacivious, assumptions about the masculinity and hypersexuality of African American women, taken together with "evidence" of their "elongated clitorises," led researchers to view them as the counterparts of the mythical African savage, also thought to be hypersexual and unusually well endowed. When racism conjoined pathologizing views of homosexuality, the subject was seen as all the more deviant and threatening to social order, and therefore in need of special regulation.

Terry also does a masterful job of placing the reception of Alfred Kinsey's studies of male and female sexual behavior within the context of the late 1940s and '50s. Anxiety pervaded the Cold War period—from hysteria about the threat of communism and an obsessive-compulsive need to differentiate Americans from un-Americans, to urgent assertions that "the nuclear family was the principal haven in a perilous world." It was during this time that conservatives "insisted that men and women were inherently different," and that "through healthy heterosexuality involving two halves of nature's intended whole, the nation's future security could be ensured."

During this period, Terry explains, homosexuals were compared to communists as "part of a strategy to underscore that homosexuals were fundamentally disloyal to the nation rather than merely errant in their behavior." People were fearful of the homosexual who passed him or herself off as "normal," just like, it was thought, communists did. Thousands of homosexuals, or people who were thought to be homosexual, were purged from the government and the military. Yet, Kinsey's study, and the rise of homophile movements during the decline of McCarthyism, ultimately helped paved the way for the gay liberation movements that would follow in the 1960s and '70s.

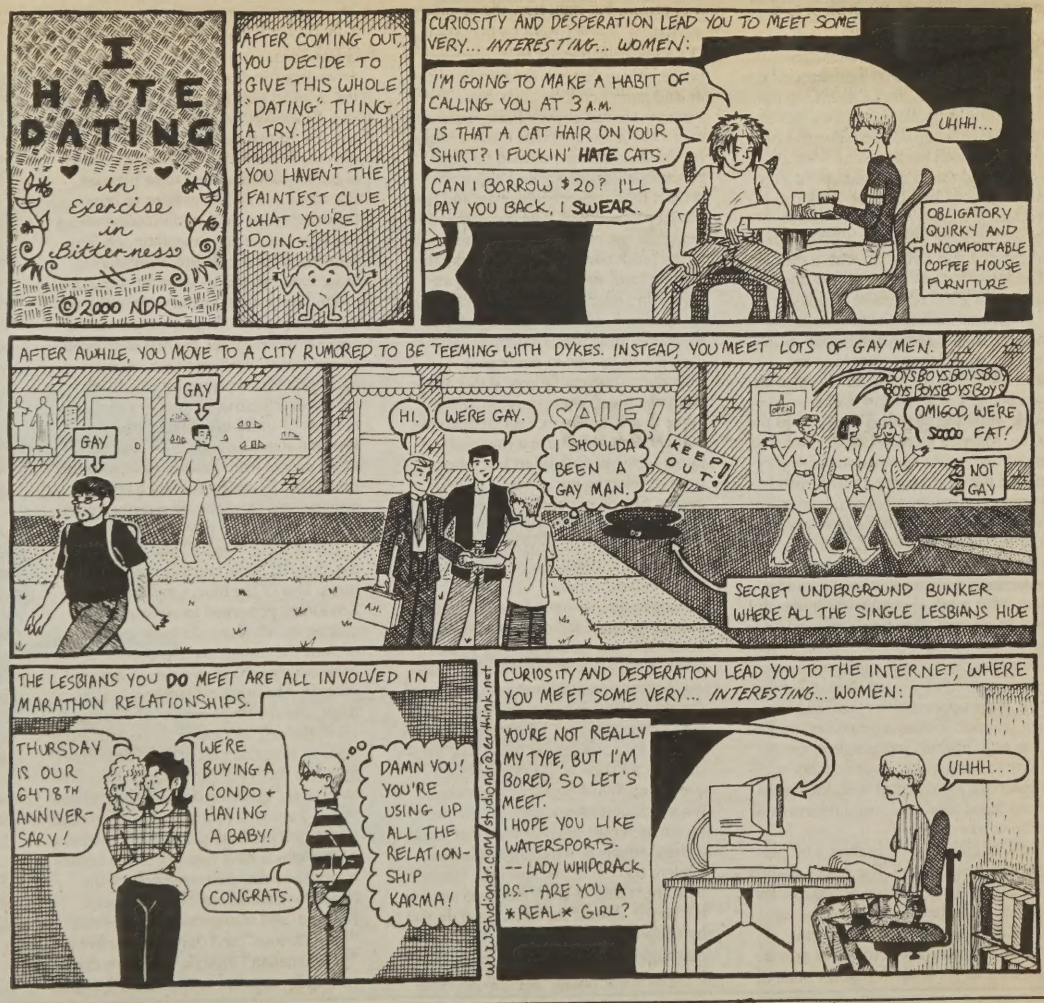
Focusing her attention on recent history, Terry considers the meaning of the fact that when AIDS was first discovered, it was referred to as GRID, Gay Related Immune Deficiency. Once AIDS was established as "gay related," experts published pamphlets on the "medical consequences of what homosexuals do." The government and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) were so effective in labeling AIDS as a symptom of deviant sexual behavior, they were shocked when "normal," heterosexual people began contracting the disease.

An American Obsession demonstrates that the construction of "normal heterosexuality" by scientific and medical discourses has given force not only to ideologies of normal sexuality, but to the very meaning of what is American. Jennifer Terry's astute observations and readability will capture the attention of readers—academic and lay people alike—who are interested in the complex history of the relationships between science, homosexuality, race, gender and American identity. This four hundred-page book is a fantastic read.

Natalie W. Josef recently received her MA in women's studies at the University of Arizona. Committed to both critiquing and embracing science, she will head off in the fall, with her two cats, to pursue a PhD in the History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

I Hate Dating

An Exercise in Bitterness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-- LADY WHIPCRACK
P.S. - ARE YOU A *REAL* GIRL?
UHHH...

Tina Williams

Continued from page 28

the end, you could wear black underwear, you didn't have to walk in twos to eat, and the doors were unlocked at night. We had books, and visits, no more passes, and an end to the arbitrary lock ups without due process. There was a law library (that now goes largely unused) and the medical care was under scrutiny. A new educational wing was built and college courses were taught. Unfortunately, however, most of the rights we fought for and won are now gone, except for the books. During his term, Governor William Weld said in a speech that he believed prison should be "a tour of hell." And when Weld was in office he slowly took back everything that we fought for.

It is also important that over time, the presence of male guards in corrections has increased significantly. Some officers had sex with the inmates and abused us mentally. The way the guards talked to women was degrading, like we were nothing. A lot of women in prison had already been abused prior to prison, and the guards continued that abusive type of relationship. I've also seen officers jump on women and beat them up in maximum security; those kinds of things are going on. You could write them up, but most likely it would be dismissed.

Unconditional Love

Women develop relationships with each other in prison where they receive unconditional love. During my stay in prison I came to love women as my sisters. I tried to help younger sisters coming in, telling them to stay in school, to get a GED, and do things to get good time. I told them how to advocate for themselves within the system, and if they couldn't, I would write for them or give them numbers to call for help.

Women supported each other, but it was sometimes hard since prison dehumanizes people. In prison you aren't encouraged to care about someone. They even use sensory deprivation to break people down. For example, if you were on the phone and your mother just told you that your grandmother died, and you started to cry, I might start crying, too. But I can't hug you in your time of pain without risking a write-up, a disciplinary report, for breaking the rules. Security classification boards as well as parole boards consider a woman's disciplinary reports in their reviews. So, even in the year 2000, I can't hug you; I can't even offer that in your time of need.

Another issue is that more and more, prisons are all about big money. The medical services are now contracted out through what is called "privatization." Except for the federal prison system, there is no authoritative body which guarantees a standard level of health care for female or male inmates across all correctional facilities. The meals are now portion-controlled, and food services are also contracted out to private companies. There are prisons where even prison labor is contracted out to someone else—like chain gangs in the past. It is just like slavery as far as I am concerned.

Women develop relationships with each other in prison where they receive unconditional love. I came to love women as my sisters. But in prison you aren't encouraged to care about someone. If you were on the phone and your mother just told you that your grandmother died, and you started to cry, I couldn't hug you without risking a disciplinary report.

Coming Back to Our Communities

So what kinds of changes can we try to make? There is a need for more prerelease services for all of the people coming out of prison, but right now the opinion of society is, "I don't want ex-prisoners in my neighborhood." When I got out of prison I went into a drug program, then to a shelter, then to a transitional housing program located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And the people in that neighborhood did not want that house there. Everybody needs to realize that when people go to jail, they are eventually coming out, and most of the time they are returning to the communities they came from. We need to try to make changes so that people have the opportunity to better themselves while they're in prison because they are coming back to their communities.

We also need to deal with the lack of affordable housing that hurts women who are trying to transition back into the community after being in prison. The average shelter stay for a woman used to be six months, now the average shelter stay is two years. Women coming out of prison and women coming out of drug treatment programs go into shelters because there is no housing. With a lack of affordable housing, a lack of beds in shelters, and a lack of halfway houses, where are women going to go?

Another barrier that people coming out of prison face is that anyone can obtain a prisoner's record. Potential landlords and employers receive more information about an ex-prisoner than they would if a regular Jane Doe was applying for a job. The ex-con enters the job or apartment already at a disadvantage because of the stigma of his or her past.

We Need to Talk about Racism and Gender Bias

I also want to stress that when we talk about women in prison, when we talk about drug addiction, when we talk about the homeless, the poor and children, we really need to talk about racism and gender bias. We need to talk about social-economic status, welfare reform, and poverty. There are two million people in prison in the United States, and Blacks represent a disproportionate percentage of those incarcerated. In fact, African American women between the ages of 20 and 39 constitute the fastest growing population in U.S. jails.

There are so many factors that contribute to the reasons young people commit crimes. In my work I try to change the system by empowering young women and men. I encourage the youth to think critically. I ask them to question everything, like: Why is it that if you live in Chelsea there is a liquor store on every corner, but Natick is a dry town? Why is that? And, where do the drugs come from that reach our communities? Where do the guns come from that are in our communities? There are no gun factories that I know of in Roxbury or other inner-city neighborhoods. We need to talk about these issues with young people and organize around these issues within our communities.

In my work I also try to raise the consciousness of girls and to break down the messages the media sends them. When young women—black, brown and white—turn on the television, the image is distorted. The layers of make-up aren't shown. And in magazines, photographs are airbrushed to present an illusion. When children of color turn on the television or open a magazine they are not represented accurately or barely at all. Media is not concerned with realistic portrayals, but with making dollars. Thick lips, big hips, and short kinky hair aren't selling. When I ask young women, "How many of you love yourself?" they all raise their hands. Then I ask them, "How many of you think that you are beautiful?" They all raise their hands. I ask them to tell me what they consider beautiful in a woman. They say long straight hair, long nails and looking good in a bathing suit. None of them looks like this.

So we have children growing up with no sense of self, who are bombarded with commercialism, messages of, "Buy Sprite, Buy Nike, and Just Do It." Our children live in a society where brand names define a person's worth, so they've got to have the product. For some, the message is "use whatever means necessary to get the thing, the image." That's the connection to prison.

When I educate people, I try to keep them in touch with reality. I try to teach them to advocate for themselves. I let them know they have rights. I want to educate young people, to empower young women and men to change the system.

Prisoner Penpals

Brenda Cottle, OAO-338
P.O. Box 180
Muncy, PA 17756
I am a 34-year-old African American lesbian. I am interested in corresponding with nice, feminine older women who are beautiful within their hearts, classic sexy, intelligent, and who are serious about living the lesbian lifestyle. I'm warmhearted, honest, loving, patient, and devoted to my woman. I'm seeking a long-term friend/soulmate/companion who is honest, stable, secure, understanding, and someone whom I can count on being in my life, someone I can give my all too. Looking for possibility of meeting while I am here and when released as well. For that special lady I'll be waiting, and race doesn't matter, it's what is in your heart that counts the most.

Karen Roberts, 998596
D-111OU
Broward Correctional Institution
P.O. Box 829503
South Florida, FL 33082
S.W.F., 35 years old, petite 5'2" and 115 lbs. Curvy and busty. Naturally curly, sun-streaked hair. Educated and seeks someone special who wants a fresh start in life. Meaningful life longed for.

Lisa Ann Harrison
A356462 B-2
Dade Correctional Institution
19000 S.W. 377th Street
Suite 200
Florida City, FL 33034
Friendly, caring lady 39 years old looking for someone to correspond with. I am incarcerated and very lonely. I would enjoy letters from someone nice.

Melissa Chacon, 827710
1401 State School Road
Riverside 3A-32
Gatesville, TX 76599
Twenty-seven years old, 5'4", 130 lbs., Hispanic with long curly brown hair, brown eyes, and light skin complexion. I like all types of music, especially Classic and New Rock. I am very outgoing and energetic. I love to dance, go cruising, and enjoy outdoor sports, especially swimming. I can read, write, and speak Spanish. I'm looking for someone who enjoys life and likes to have fun. I'm very open-minded, loving, and an all-out woman. I've been locked up for two years and should be released within 6-12 months. Please write me.

Ramona Mouton, 853453
1916 North Highway 36 Bypass
Gatesville, TX 76596
Lovely, Black female, 31 years of age. Briefly confined. Love the outdoors, cooking, and music. Honest and sincere. Looking for someone who wants to be loved and is willing to love in return.

Debra Mendez, W-64452
V.S.P.W. B4-06-01U
P.O. Box 92
Chowchilla, CA 93610-0092
I am an intelligent, free-spirited American Indian, looking for a special person to correspond with while I am serving my state-issued time. I enjoy country music, hard work, and long talks of life and freedom.

Leslie Seiferit, 515783
1401 State School Road
Gatesville, TX 76599
G.W.F., brown hair, hazel eyes, teddy bear type. I like kids, animals, camping, and movies. I like to have fun and enjoy life, and am looking for a penpal/friend and maybe something special. Write soon, you will not be disappointed.

Geraldine Lewis, 914732
401 North Randolph Street
Indianapolis, IN 46201
I have curly black hair and brown eyes. I am an attractive Black woman seeking a good friend or maybe more. My hobbies are fishing, camping, jogging, watching movies, long walks through the park, and romance. I love to cook a good meal and I love to listen to whatever you have to say to me. My hope and dream is that one day I will be free from this place and will get a good job, a house, and a car. Also I hope I will find someone who will love me for me.

New Address
Roberta Lystad, W-73801
V.S.P.W. B4-06-04U
P.O. Box 92
Chowchilla, CA 93610-0092

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel
HOOP DREAMS PART 1
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336
WHO'S SYDNEY TALKING TO? I WONDER IF MO FINALLY FOLDED AND AGREED TO AN OPEN RELATIONSHIP?
LOIS, I'M TRYING TO WATCH THE GAME
LOOK, THERE'S YOUR LITTLE FRIEND CLARICE.
dot.com.com
Go Fight Win Lady Porcupines!
Go Tim
HI, LOIS. HI, GINGER. GOOD GAME, HUH?
WHATEVER. WATCH MY SEAT. I'M GONNA GO GET A DRINK.
DE-FENSE! DE-FENSE!
MEANWHILE, AT THE OTHER END OF THE BLEACHERS...
CAN YOU KEEP AN EYE ON RAFFI TILL CLARICE GETS BACK? I'M GOING TO THE BATHROOM.
The Butches
Team Names
IN THE LOBBY...
HEY, LOIS! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AT A GAME BEFORE.
UH... HI, JERRY. I JUST CAME WITH MY HOUSEMATE. ARE YOU A FAN?
MEN
A FAN?! SEE THAT TROPHY? I WAS A LADY PORCUPINE THE YEAR WE WENT TO THE NCAA'S!
AND IN THE LADIES ROOM...
TONI!
GLORIA?!
Flush
BUT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE IN ALBUQUERQUE!
WE JUST MOVED BACK LAST WEEK! ANA GOT TRANSFERRED AGAIN.
I... NOBODY TOLD ME!
I THOUGHT OF CALLING YOU. BUT YOU KNOW, WE HAVEN'T BEEN IN TOUCH... AND WE PARTED ON SUCH AN AWKWARD NOTE.
SO, HOW'S RAFFI? AND UH, CLARICE?
BACK IN THE STANDS...
YESSS!
3
MEN! THE LADY PORCUPINES ARE UP BY ONE AT THE HALFTIME BUZZER! TUNE IN NEXT TIME AS THE TECHNICAL FOUL CONTINUES!
HOOP DREAMS PART 2
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337
WE LAST LEFT OUR SPORADIC SPORTSFANS AT HALF-TIME.
PLAY APPEARS TO HAVE RESUMED.
Y'KNOW, IT'S NOT SO MUCH THE EVANGELICAL TYPES I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH. THERE'S NO REASONING WITH THEM. SO LET THEM HAVE THEIR DAMN HELLFIRE.
COLLEGEVILLE'S BACK ANTI-SAME-SEX MARRIAGE INITIATIVE BY LANDSLIDE VOTE
IT'S THE REST OF THESE COMPLACENT YAHOOS I WANT TO SMACK. WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE IN? DAVID LETTERMAN? YET TAKE A POLL, AND IT'S "SAME-SEX MARRIAGE? UH, I DON'T THINK SO. CAN I HAVE MY REMOTE BACK NOW?"
ROAR!
WHERE'S MOMMY AND MEEMA?
THEY'RE OFF GABBING, TIGUERITO. THEY'LL BE BACK ANY MINUTE NOW.
W. VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE BANS GAY MARRIAGE
DANG! DID WE SCORE? I KEEP MISSING THE EXCITING PARTS.
MUST BE SOME SORT OF CONSPIRACY.
MEANWHILE, IN THE LOBBY...
GLORIA, WE'VE GOT TO GET TOGETHER! I CAN TELL YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SCHOOLS FOR STELLA.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS! YOU REALLY LOOK GREAT!
GO LADY PORCUPINES
WOW
AND LOIS IS LOBBYING TOO...
SO JERRY, UH... D'YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND YET?
NAH. LISTEN, I WANT TO GET BACK TO THE GAME, BUT COME BY THE GARAGE SOMETIME. IT'S BEEN TOO LONG. YOU MUST BE OVERDUE FOR AN OIL CHANGE.
TWEET!
GINGER AND CLARICE FLIRT WITH A POSSIBILITY...
Y'KNOW, THERE'S A PICKUP GAME AT THE 'Y' WEDNESDAY NIGHTS. WE SHOULD GO SOMETIME.
THAT SOUNDS REALLY FUN. I HAVEN'T TOUCHED A BALL IN YEARS.
AND ACROSS THE BLEACHERS...
THE GLORIA? THE LEGENDARY GLORIA OF YOUR SEXUAL FANTASIES? SHOW HER TO ME!
WHERE'S CLARICE? HAS SHE BEEN GONE ALL THIS TIME?
HERE COMES LOIS. I GUESS I SHOULD GET BACK TO MY SEAT.
IT WAS, UM... REALLY NICE TALKING TO YOU.
OH, MAN! I'M IN TROUBLE. I HAVE YOU EVER TOTALLY WANTED SOMEONE WHO WAS JUST, LIKE, WRONG?
WHAT?
LATER, AFTER THE LADY PORCUPINES SUFFER AN IGNOMINIOUS SHELLACKING...
WHAT A GREAT GAME!
WASN'T IT THRILLING?

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—Marge Piercy, novelist, poet, playwright

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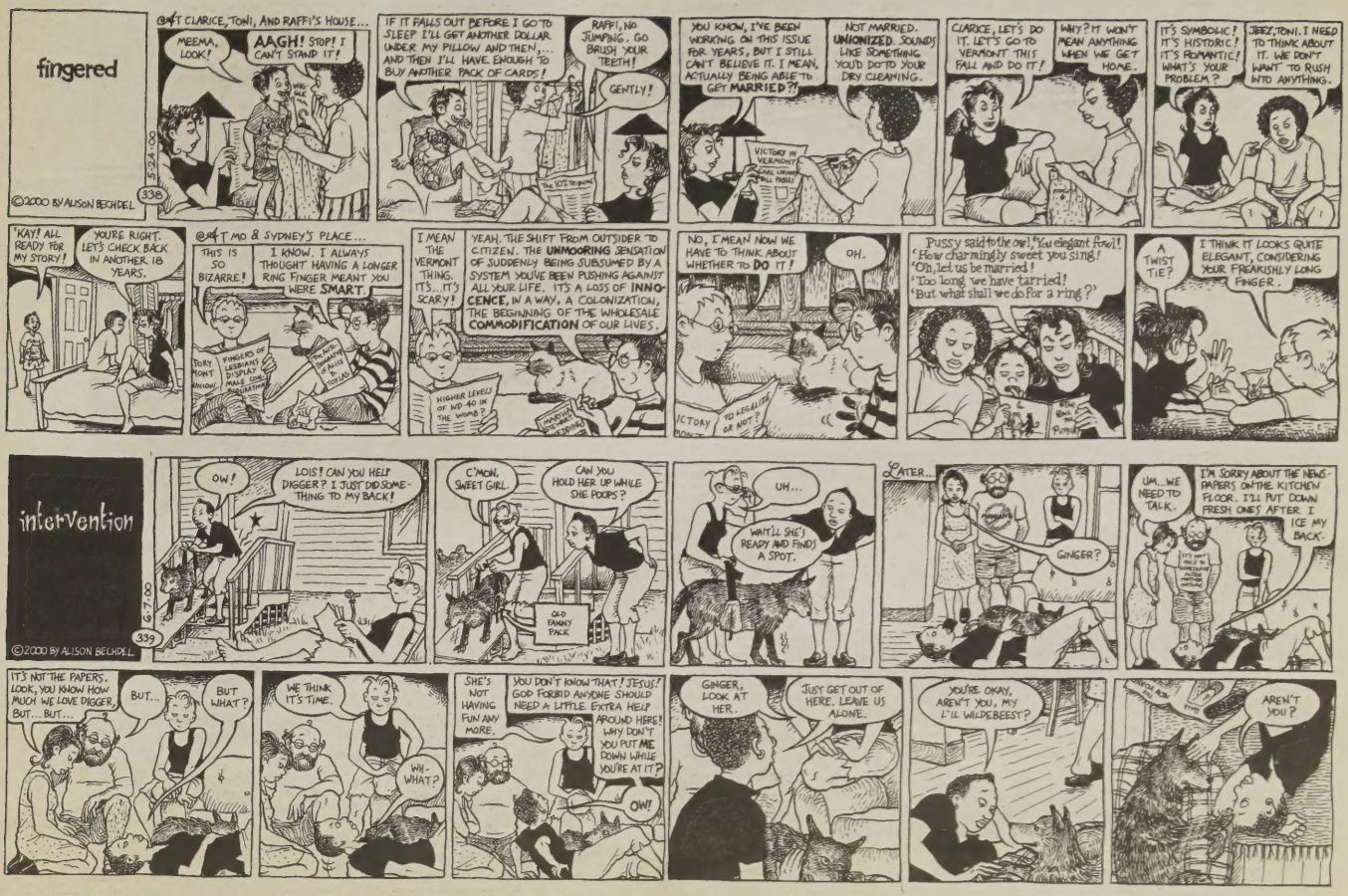
Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel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@AT CLARICE, TONI, AND RAFFI'S HOUSE...
MEEMA, LOOK!
AAGH! STOP! I CAN'T STAND IT!
IF IT FALLS OUT BEFORE I GO TO SLEEP I'LL GET ANOTHER DOLLAR. UNDER MY PILLOW AND THEN... AND THEN I'LL HAVE ENOUGH TO BUY ANOTHER PACK OF CARDS!
RAFFI, NO JUMPING. GO BRUSH YOUR TEETH!
GENTLY!
YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS ISSUE FOR YEARS, BUT I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT. I MEAN, ACTUALLY BEING ABLE TO GET MARRIED?!
NOT MARRIED. UNIONIZED. SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING YOU'D DO TO YOUR DRY CLEANING.
VICTORY IN VERMONT! CIVIL UNIONS FOR ALL PASS!
CLARICE, LET'S DO IT. LET'S GO TO VERMONT THIS FALL AND DO IT!
WHY? IT WON'T MEAN ANYTHING WHEN WE GET HOME.
IT'S SYMBOLIC! IT'S HISTORIC! IT'S ROMANTIC! WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?
JESS, TONI. I NEED TO THINK ABOUT IT. WE DON'T WANT TO RUSH INTO ANYTHING.
'KAY! ALL READY FOR MY STORY!
YOU'RE RIGHT. LET'S CHECK BACK IN ANOTHER 18 YEARS.
@AT MO & SYDNEY'S PLACE...
THIS IS SO BIZARRE!
I KNOW. I ALWAYS THOUGHT HAVING A LONGER RING FINGER MEANT YOU WERE SMART.
TODAY MONT KNOW!
FINGERS OF LESBIANS DISPLAY MALE SEX HORMONES
I MEAN THE VERMONT THING. IT'S... IT'S SCARY!
YEAH. THE SHIFT FROM OUTSIDER TO CITIZEN. THE UNMOORING SENSATION OF SUDDENLY BEING SUBSUMED BY A SYSTEM YOU'VE BEEN PUSHING AGAINST ALL YOUR LIFE. IT'S A LOSS OF INNOCENCE, IN A WAY, A COLONIZATION, THE BEGINNING OF THE WHOLESALE COMMODIFICATION OF OUR LIVES.
HIGHER LEVELS OF HCG IN THE WOMB?
NO, I MEAN NOW WE HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHETHER TO DO IT!
OH.
VICTORY NOW... TO LEGALIZE OR NOT?
Pussy said to the owl, "You elegant fowl!
'How charmingly sweet you sing!
'Oh, let us be married!
'Too long we have tarried!
'But what shall we do for a ring?'
A TWIST TIE?
I THINK IT LOOKS QUITE ELEGANT, CONSIDERING YOUR FREAKISHLY LONG FINGER.
intervention
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OW!
LOIS! CAN YOU HELP DIGGER? I JUST DID SOMETHING TO MY BACK!
C'MON, SWEET GIRL.
CAN YOU HOLD HER UP WHILE SHE POOPS?
OLD FANNY PACK
UH...
WAIT'LL SHE'S READY AND FIND A SPOT.
LATER...
GINGER?
UM... WE NEED TO TALK.
I'M SORRY ABOUT THE NEWSPAPERS ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR. I'LL PUT DOWN FRESH ONES AFTER I ICE MY BACK.
IT'S NOT THE PAPERS. LOOK, YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WE LOVE DIGGER, BUT... BUT...
BUT...
BUT WHAT?
WE THINK IT'S TIME.
WH-WHAT?
SHE'S NOT HAVING FUN ANY MORE.
YOU DON'T KNOW THAT! JESUS! GOD FORBID ANYONE SHOULD NEED A LITTLE EXTRA HELP AROUND HERE! WHY DON'T YOU PUT ME DOWN WHILE YOU'RE AT IT?
OW!
GINGER, LOOK AT HER.
JUST GET OUT OF HERE. LEAVE US ALONE.
YOU'RE OKAY, AREN'T YOU, MY LI'L WILDEBEEST?
AREN'T YOU?

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A Puzzling Polemic for Same-Sex Marriage

What Is Marriage For?

By E.J. Graff
Beacon Press, 1999, $15.00

Reviewed by
Paula L. Ettelbrick

For those who do not spend most of their waking hours tracking the state of marriage and the family in this country (and for some of us who do), E.J. Graff has provided a fascinating march through the history of marriage in Western society. In her book *What is Marriage For?*, Graff gives historical weight to the fact that marriage, since its creation, has shifted and changed, sometimes dramatically, usually gradually, in response to social, religious, economic, and political pressures. In short, there is very little historical support for what is termed "traditional marriage" or the "traditional family." The institution of marriage has a much different purpose and meaning today than it did a hundred, five hundred, or a thousand years ago.

Graff brings to her inquiry exhaustive research, intelligent insight, and a journalist's uncanny ability to sift through thousands of facts and often competing interpretations of history to tell a coherent story. She cites six primary purposes that have fueled marriage at different points over two millennia—Money, Sex, Babies, Kin, Order, and Heart. Each chapter deftly builds on the last, leaving the reader with a general grounding in the ways in which Western culture's most enduring social convention still dictates the way we think about families, gender, and sex. We learn that civil marriage laws did not make their debut until about the sixteenth century. The "law" that governed marriage was determined by the clan, the family, or the Catholic Church, depending upon the particular time and place in history. The most useful lesson in this book, from an advocacy standpoint, is Graff's documentation that marriage is not a static institution that is only now being challenged by uppity lesbian and gay people who are threatening all of Western culture. But before going into the interesting details of the book, the reader should be forewarned about some glaring oversights.

Like most writers, Graff has more than idle curiosity about her subject. She has an agenda: to argue the case for her right to marry her partner, Madeline. While the personal voice of the "outsider-looking-in" can provide moral suasion and strength to an argument, this book disappoints in three fundamental ways. First, she seems to take the issue of same-sex marriage almost too personally as being about herself and her partner. While that personal perspective might make for a nice article, we might expect broader commentary in this book—commentary about how the force of history has led, yet again, to a major change in the meaning and purpose of marriage. To do this, however, Graff would need to explore in depth the period most influential to current national discussions about the role of marriage and family—the last 30 years—which she inexplicably fails to do. The influence of feminism, queer culture, challenges to state control over sexuality and sexual decision-making, and the separation of sex from reproduction are all part of the incredible history that bring us to the reality of a civil union law in Vermont and the likelihood that it won't be the last state to speak on the subject of same-sex relationships.

Author E.J. Graff

Second, her brush-off of feminist insight into marriage is mind-boggling. Feminist critique of marriage, from the first wave of feminism to whichever wave we are riding now, has served the history-changing purpose of restructuring the cultural meaning of marriage, sex roles, and sexuality. The history that Graff herself presents to us—of fathers selling their daughters into marriage; the Catholic Church's obsession with concocting rules that would continue its control over the subject of

Continued on page 47

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Lesbian Philanthropy:

Growing Funds along with Growing Challenges to a Tradition of Radical Giv

By Marcia Gallo

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